

artsLife

Inside Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts

SPRING 2024

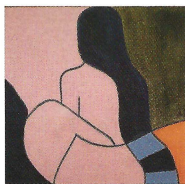
A FEAST FOR THE SENSES

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fun, food, drink and much more music.

Also Inside:

New Broadway Season • Meet David Spade
Cool Summer Camps • Hot Tickets and More





The Voice of the People: Freedom of Speech

What's New? Recent Acquisitions

Transformations: Spirituality, Ritual, and Society

American Visions: Recent Additions to the Collection

Through May 12, 2024

Silent Protest: Perspectives on War and Disability

This project is supported in part by the
National Endowment for the Arts. #NEABigRead

Through April 7, 2024



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

Jenny Holzer (American, b. 1950) *6 Text: U.S. government document*, 2012, Oil on Linen, 84 7/8 x 65 3/4 x 2 3/4 in. The Alfond Collection of Contemporary Art, Rollins Museum of Art. Gift of Barbara '68 and Theodore '68 Alfond, 2015.1.10 © 2017 Jenny Holzer / Member Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York. Image courtesy of the artist and Sprüthé Magers, Berlin, London, and Los Angeles

Annette Rawlings (American, b. 1943) *Summer Nudes – Yvette (detail)*, 2005, Oil on canvas, 18 x 24 in. Gift of F. Hawryliw. 2023.14 © Annette Rawlings

Cosimo Rosselli (Italian, 1439 – 1507) *Madonna Enthroned Nursing the Christ Child*, ca. 1470, Tempera, gilding on panel, 49 1/2 x 35 1/2 x 6 1/8 in. Gift of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation. 1937.1

Yoan Capote (Cuban, b. 1977) *Abstinencia (Libertad)*, 2014, Cast bronze, engraving, and drypoint, dimensions variable The Alfond Collection of Contemporary Art, Rollins Museum of Art. Gift of Barbara '68 and Theodore '68 Alfond. 2014.1.39 © Yoan Capote. Image courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

CENTER

Robert Henri (American, 1865 – 1929) *Rosaleen (detail)*, 1928, Oil on canvas, 35 1/2 x 27 1/2 x 2 in. Intended Gift From The Martin Andersen – Gracia Andersen Foundation, Inc. 2022.16.LTL



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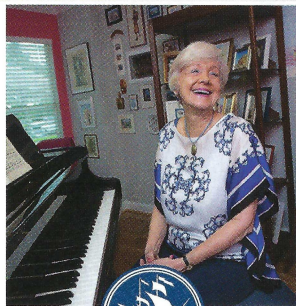
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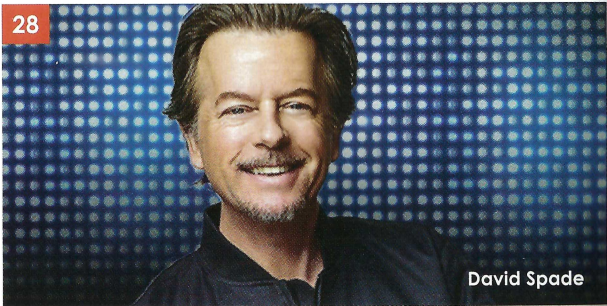
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Opera Orlando: Lucia di Lammermoor

Steinmetz Hall | Apr 19 & 21

Aesop's Fables

The Plaza Live | Apr 20 & 21

Symphony of Illusions

Steinmetz Hall | Apr 27

Rimma Presents

Mendelssohn & Tchaikovsky

First United Methodist Church of Orlando

May 6

Beethoven's 5th

Steinmetz Hall | May 11 & 12

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows™

Part 1 in Concert

Walt Disney Theater | June 21 & 22

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"On behalf of Dr. Phillips Charities
and its Board of Directors,
welcome to the Dr. Phillips Center
for the Performing Arts."

- Kenneth D. Robinson
President & CEO

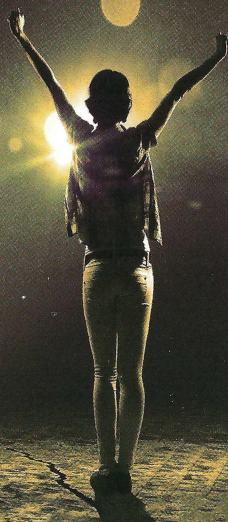


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Once the largest citrus grower in the world,
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The Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts
continues the Phillips family legacy - more than
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We are pleased to honor the Phillips family and look
forward to enjoying outstanding performances
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A COOL NEW VENUE, A HOT NEW SEASON, COMMUNITY GIVEBACKS AND MORE.

Friends,

Arts For Every Life® was in full effect this season. We officially opened our fifth venue, supported emerging works, partnered with new community groups, engaged thousands of students and announced our next season of incredible Broadway shows.

In February, we celebrated the grand opening of Judson's Live, an intimate performance space inspired by legendary listening rooms in the world's greatest music cities.

With performances spanning almost every musical genre—from jazz to country, bluegrass to blues—Judson's Live invites guests to discover new artists, while connecting over creative cocktails and sharable plates. Tickets are on sale now at JudsonsLive.org.

Our educational programs made a major impact as well. More than 14,300 students took part in 6th & Jazz, a free education initiative connecting local sixth graders with professional jazz musicians.

Our sold-out youth theater production of *Matilda The Musical* engaged 50 student performers in a seven-show run seen by 1,468 guests, while the Pilobolus @ Play residency taught community groups the movement creation skills that made the dance troupe famous.

We welcomed more than 770 guests from new organizations to experience Disney's *Aladdin*, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and *Moulin Rouge! The Musical* through our community giveback initiatives and invested in the up-and-coming musical *Brooklyn's Bridge*—continuing our commitment to workshoping new stage productions.

Looking ahead, we're thrilled to announce our AdventHealth Broadway 24/25 Season, which highlights familiar favorites as well as recent hits. The 15-week season features 11 shows, making this our biggest Broadway season to date.

We also welcome back *UCF Celebrates the Arts* as the university activates the entire campus to showcase arts programs and the talents of students, faculty and special guests.

We're thankful for the continued support of our board members, donors, partners and entire team—who have shown us that together, great people can achieve great things.

Best,



Katherine Ramsberger
President & CEO





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HOT TICKETS

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DISNEY PRINCESS: THE CONCERT

Monday, April 8 | 7:30 p.m.

Steinmetz Hall | Tickets start at \$40

VIP PACKAGES AVAILABLE

Be our guest as an all-star quartet of beautiful princesses—and, of course, a handsome prince—present an unforgettable evening of songs and stories in *Disney Princess: The Concert*. Although princesses rotate in and out of the cast, the most recent lineup includes Lissa deGuzman (Princess Jasmine in *Aladdin*), Syndee Winters (Nala in *The Lion King*) and Anneliese van der Pol (Belle in *Beauty and the Beast*). Two Broadway veterans: Adam J. Levy, the prince, and Benjamin Rauhala, the music director, will have the enviable task of supporting the princesses, who'll deliver more than 30 familiar songs from Disney films. You'll hear, among other favorites, "A Whole New World" (*Aladdin*), "Let It Go" (*Frozen*), "Part of Your World" (*The Little Mermaid*) and "How Far I'll Go" (*Moana*). Larger-than-life animation will accompany the music and immerse the audience in a magical world that Central Floridians know better than most. Cast members will also share hilarious and heartfelt behind-the-scenes stories from their time on the stage and in front of the cameras. *Disney Princess: The Concert* is based on the touring production *Broadway Princess Party*, which began in 2015 as a cabaret show at Feinstein's/54 Below in New York City. The original show was a critical success and a fan favorite, drawing sellout crowds and later garnering 20 million views on YouTube. Youngsters—as well as the young at heart—are invited to wear their finest royal regalia to the performance.





GO ONLINE

for a full calendar, tickets
and more information
drphillipscenter.org/events

Shows are subject to change

BIG HITS FROM THE BOX OFFICE

Presented by Central Florida Community Arts
Thursday–Saturday, April 18–20

7:30 p.m. (Thursday & Friday)

3 & 7:30 p.m. (Saturday)

Alexis & Jim Pugh Theater

Tickets start at \$24.50

The Central Florida Community Arts (CFCArts) Big Band will celebrate some of the most fun and familiar movie music of all time in *Big Hits from the Box Office*, which will feature such timeless tunes as "Hooked on a Feeling" (from *Guardians of the Galaxy*), "Pure Imagination" (from *Willy Wonka*

and the *Chocolate Factory*), "Gonna Fly Now" (from *Rocky*), "Soul Man" (from *The Blues Brothers*) and "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" (from *The Wizard of Oz*) among many others. The 40-piece ensemble is directed by Justin Muchoney, who's also vice president for creative and production for CFCArts. The community-based nonprofit encompasses numerous musical troupes and theatrical programs as well as educational programs for children and youth of all abilities. The CFCArts Big Band has been voted "Best Jazz Act" by readers of *Orlando Weekly* in 2023.



Special thanks to our partners.



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drphillipscenter.org/corporate

EXTRA! EXTRA!

Here are some of the additional performances booked through summer as artsLife went to press. Visit drphillipscenter.org for the most up-to-date information.



Derek
Hough

DEREK HOUGH

Symphony of Dance

Saturday, April 20 | 7 p.m.
Walt Disney Theater
Tickets start at \$49.75

MATILDA JR.

*Presented by Tap
Into Theatre Academy*
Thursday & Tuesday, May 2 & 28
4:30 & 8 p.m. (both days)
Alexis & Jim Pugh Theater
Tickets start at \$30

HOORAY FOR HOLLYWOOD

*Presented by CFCArts
Community Choir*
Saturday & Sunday, June 15 & 16
7 p.m. (Saturday), 3 p.m. (Sunday)
Steinmetz Hall
Tickets start at \$20

JOSEPHINE

A Burlesque Cabaret Dream Play
Friday & Saturday, June 21 & 22
8 p.m.
Alexis & Jim Pugh Theater
Tickets start at \$40
Admission for ages 18 and up

MARCA MP

Friday, August 9 | 7:30 p.m.
Steinmetz Hall
Tickets start at \$64.50

artsLife
Inside Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts



CONTACT US

Physical Address:

445 S. Magnolia Ave.
Orlando, FL 32801

Box Office Hours:

Monday–Friday, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
Saturday, Noon–4 p.m.
844.513.2014

Administrative Address:

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LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR

Presented by Opera Orlando
Friday & Sunday, April 19 & 21
7:30 p.m. (Friday), 2 p.m. (Sunday)
Steinmetz Hall | Tickets start at \$29

If you love *Game of Thrones*, then you'll also love *Lucia di Lammermoor*, which marks the finale of Opera Orlando's MainStage Season. With music by Gaetano Donizetti and libretto by Salvatore Cammarano, this *dramma tragico* is a tale of love, jealousy, betrayal and madness as Lady Lucia Ashton is torn between allegiance to her family and love for Sir Edgardo di Ravenswood—a sworn enemy of the Ashtons. This intriguing adaptation was designed and directed by Opera Orlando Artistic Director Gabriel Preisser, who drew inspiration from the HBO dramatic fantasy series that notched 59 Emmy nominations and became a pop culture phenomenon during its run. Atlanta-based soprano Marnie Breckenridge will make her local debut in the title role, while baritone Grant Preisser (the opera's general director and brother of Gabriel) will portray Lucia's duplicitous and desperate brother, Lord Enrico Ashton. The cast will also include the company's 2023–24 studio artists, members of the Opera Orlando chorus and dancers from Orlando Ballet. Robert Wood will conduct the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra.

COMING UP: A season add-on, *The Juniper Tree*, will be staged in partnership with Victorian spook troupe Phantasmagoria and the always-amazing MicheLee Puppets. This haunting chamber opera, a contemporary retelling of the Grimm Brothers' darkest fairy tale, was composed by Philip Glass and Robert Moran to a libretto by Arthur Yorinks. Showtimes will be Friday and Saturday, May 10 and 11, at 7:30 p.m. both nights in the Alexis & Jim Pugh Theater.

Marnie Breckenridge (top) will play the title role in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, designed and directed by Gabriel Preisser (center). Grant Preisser (bottom) will play Lucia's duplicitous brother, Lord Enrico Ashton.

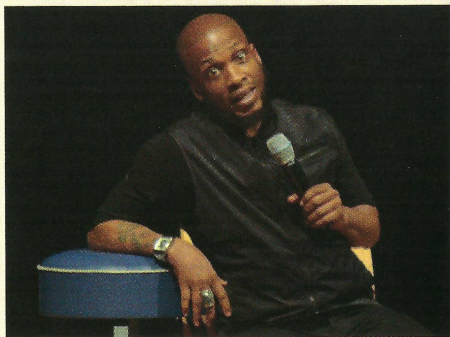


ALI SIDDIQ*I Got a Story to Tell*

Saturday, April 20 | 7 p.m.

Steinmetz Hall | Tickets start at \$30

If any comedian truly had some stories to tell, it would be Ali Siddiq. The Houston native was raised in subsidized housing and imprisoned at age 19 for trafficking cocaine. But while incarcerated, Siddiq discovered that he had the ability to make others laugh—a skill that came in handy while behind bars. Then, after serving six years, Siddiq was released and tried his hand at stand-up comedy in local clubs. He found his groove as a storyteller, not a jokester, and peppered his routines with observations about his personal life, current events, race and politics. Siddiq's first television appearance was in 2008, on HBO's *Def Comedy Jam*. In 2012, he appeared on BET's *Comic View* and at the Just for Laughs comedy festival in Montreal. In 2013, Siddiq was named Comedy Central's "No. 1 Comic to Watch." Then came a critically acclaimed hour-long Comedy Central special, *Ali*



Siddiq: It's Bigger Than These Bars, filmed in the Bell County Jail in Belton, Texas. Says *The Guardian*: "Siddiq takes pains not to glamorize his poor, sharp-elbowed upbringing or his later criminality. But he can't help but do so—if only because he's emerged from both so enviably cool and confident." He has since appeared on numerous talk shows, released five comedy CDs and—remembering where he came from—performed for charitable organizations and volunteered for the Harris County (Texas) Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program. | *Comedy at Dr. Phillips Center* is supported by *Modelo Especial*.

ANDRÉS CEPEDA*Con el invitado especial**Alejandro Santamaría*

Wednesday, April 24 | 8 p.m.

Steinmetz Hall | Tickets start at \$39.50

VIP PACKAGES AVAILABLE

Bogotá-born Andrés Cepeda—a producer and singer who has won three Latin Grammys (out of 13 nominations)—melds Latin pop and rock with dashes of bolero and balladry, attracting fans from all genres. His style has been described as sophisticated, refined and emotionally connected with his audience. Cepeda's musical career began as the lead singer for Poligamia, a Bogotá-based rock band. During Poligamia's eight-year run, the group enjoyed chart success with the singles "Fade" and "Mi Generación." In his subsequent solo career, Cepeda has received multiple diamond, platinum and gold records, and toured the world with such Latin superstars as Juan Luis Guerra, Jesse & Joy, Cali & El Dandee, Morat, Joss Favela, Leo Dan, Fonesca, Ricardo Montaner, Kany García, Tommy Torres and many others. In 2020, he released his ninth studio album, *Mi Balcón*, which debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard Latin Albums chart. In addition, Cepeda is an active philanthropist, environmental activist and a vocal advocate for LGBTQ+ rights.



SYMPHONY OF ILLUSIONS

Presented by the

Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra

Saturday, April 27 | 3:30 & 7:30 p.m.

Steinmetz Hall | Tickets start at \$46.50

Entertainment Weekly calls Michael Grandinetti "a great magician who can truly communicate with a TV audience." *Hidden Remote* says he's "a fan favorite with charisma and an easy rapport with an audience," while *Digital Journal* lauds him as "one of magic's best-loved magicians, the one to watch." Grandinetti has combined the worlds of magic and music as a featured guest artist with an array of symphony orchestras, including those in Augusta, Grand Rapids, Huntsville, Phoenix, Rochester—and soon, Orlando, with the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra's *Symphony of Illusions*. Under the baton of conductor Chelsea Gallo, the orchestra will play musical selections themed to accompany Grandinetti's no-holds-barred feats. The Pittsburgh-born magician has appeared on numerous TV shows and performed during halftime extravaganzas for the NBA and NFL. During a five-season

stint on the CW's *Masters of Illusion*, he appeared to shrink a girl to the size of a basketball, bring a one-dimensional painting to life and melt his body through the spinning metal blades of a five-foot-wide industrial fan. *Symphony of Illusions* is the grand—very grand—finale of the Phil's 2023–24 Pops Series.

COMING UP: The Phil's 2023–24 Classics Season will conclude with a performance of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 5*, which opens with perhaps the most familiar motif in classical music: da-da-da-dum! The program also includes works by Mozart (*Ave Verum Corpus*), Hindemith (*Symphonic Metamorphosis*) and Mahler (*Rückert-Lieder*). Eric Jacobsen will conduct the orchestra. Guests will include the University of Central Florida Concert Choir, conducted by Jeffery Redding; and the Stetson University Concert Choir, conducted by Timothy Peter. Jamie Barton, mezzo soprano, will sing the five-part Mahler composition. Showtimes will be Saturday and Sunday, May 11 and 12, at 7:30 on Saturday and 3 p.m., on Sunday in Steinmetz Hall.

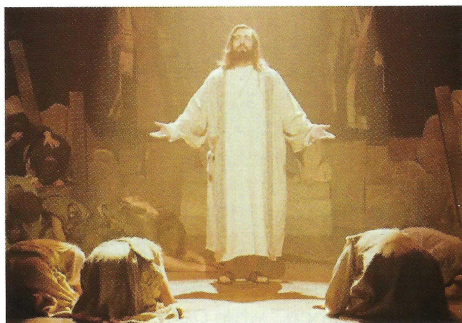
Michael Grandinetti



THE THORN

Monday & Tuesday, April 29 & 30 | 7 p.m.
Walt Disney Theater | Tickets start at \$43.68
VIP PACKAGES AVAILABLE

John Bolin's Bible-based stage production *The Thorn* isn't a traditional play or a traditional musical, although it has elements of both. Bolin, CEO of Bridgehouse Media—which primarily develops TV and film projects—describes it as a “cirque-immersive experience” that features live music, aerial acts, martial arts, modern dance and over-the-top visual effects. “I wanted to do a drama that would show and communicate and demonstrate the love of Jesus for young people,” Bolin told *Christian Headlines*. “And I didn't want to pull any punches. I didn't want to be graphic, but I also wanted them to know that this really happened and He loves you this much.” *The Thorn*, which tells the story of Jesus from Creation to the Book of Acts, has been seen by more than 1 million people during the two decades since it was launched. (The production was filmed and released to theaters last year. It is now streaming on Amazon Prime.) Bolin, who launched *The Thorn* while working as a youth pastor in the 1990s, says that it's for all ages but is an especially powerful experience for teenagers.



DANIEL SLOSS

CAN'T

Tuesday, April 30 | 7:30 p.m.
Steinmetz Hall | Tickets start at \$39.50
Recommended for ages 16-plus

Scottish comedian Daniel Sloss, who began his stand-up career at age 17 at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, is one of the most popular comedians in the world and has sold out venues in 55 countries. But he hasn't done it by serving up inoffensive pabulum. An avowed foe of “cancel culture,” Sloss may get away with controversial material primarily because he often diffuses explosive remarks with impish charm. “I’m glad the Queen is dead,” he states with a deadpan stare, then smirks and adds: “See, it’s almost as if I meant it.” Sloss calls himself “the Steve Irwin of comedy” because he approaches telling jokes like Irwin—who was famously killed by a stingray—did studying wild animals: It’s fun and fascinating but could also be fatal. Although Sloss’s dark comedy has been tempered somewhat by fatherhood, a critic described a



performance on his current CAN'T tour this way: “We winced, laughed, squirmed and dug our heads into our hands as he crossed the line, crossed it again and crossed it once more. Still, somehow, this Scotsman’s narrative delivery and innate sensitivity seemingly got him off scot-free.” Sloss began his invasion of the U.S. in 2013 with an appearance on TBS’s *Conan* and has subsequently appeared eight more times. He has also played off-Broadway in New York, opened for Dave Chappelle, and taped two stand-up specials for Netflix and one for HBO. A slew of additional TV appearances and world tours has landed this 33-year-old “fringe” performer squarely on the A-list.

HATSUNE MIKU

MIKU EXPO 2024 North America

Thursday, May 2 | 8 p.m.

Walt Disney Theater | Tickets start at \$59.50

VIP PACKAGES AVAILABLE



"Is it live or is it Memorex?" Television viewers of a certain age will recognize this ubiquitous advertising slogan for a now-defunct audio cassette manufacturer. As it relates to pop star Hatsune Miku, the question might be "Is she live or is she a hologram?" Fans of the blue-haired Japanese teenager know, of course, that the elfish singer is a virtual creation whose manga-style face and trilling voice anchor a synthesized singing application called Vocaloid. But you no longer must be flesh and blood to draw packed houses of fans who dance, cheer and wave green glowsticks. Miku—whose name is an amalgamation of Japanese words for "first," "sound" and "future"—has her own feverish following, which consists in part of gamers and users of the software. In fact, the character was originally developed by Japan-based Crypton Future Media for use by musicians who wished to add vocals to their tracks. But the unexpected popularity of the software's perky personification led creators to market her as a personality as well as a technology. And it worked. Miku opened concerts for Lady Gaga in 2014 and has subsequently toured the world with her own live show, which includes real backup singers (dressed as characters from video games) and musicians. She has also expanded into games and anime. Unsurprisingly, given that she isn't human, Miku rarely misses a show and never hits a sour note.

THE CONCERT: A TRIBUTE TO ABBA

Friday, May 3 | 8 p.m.

Walt Disney Theater | Tickets start at \$39.50

VIP PACKAGES AVAILABLE

Their songs encompass the soundtrack of our lives: "Dancing Queen;" "Fernando;" "Gimme, Gimme, Gimme;" "Mamma Mia;" "Money, Money, Money;" "The Winner Takes It All;" and "Waterloo" among other ubiquitous radio hits made ABBA the second highest-selling band of all time, behind only the Beatles. ABBA—which consisted of Agnetha Fältskog, Benny Andersson, Björn Ulvaeus and Anni-Frid Lyngstad—lasted for a decade and disbanded in 1982. But the Swedish supergroup continues to permeate pop culture with bestselling compilation albums and even a jukebox musical, *Mama Mia!*, which spawned a film and a sequel. Naturally, there are ABBA tribute bands everywhere. Many fans, however, think that 21st Century Artists—which has presented some version of *The Concert: A Tribute to ABBA* for

more than a decade—has managed to assemble the most pitch-perfect musical doppelgängers ever to don groovy suits, bellbottom jeans or disco-ready spandex catsuits. So, get ready to party like it's 1976 with an ensemble that *Unratedmag.com* describes as "by far the best tribute band performing the hits of one of the best pop bands ever." | Family at Dr. Phillips Center is supported by Experience Kissimmee.



ONE NIGHT OF QUEEN

Performed by Gary Mullen & The Works

Saturday, May 4 | 8 p.m.

Walt Disney Theater | Tickets start at \$39.50

They will, they will rock you! Singer Gary Mullen and The Works have traveled the world with their *One Night of Queen* concert, delivering astonishing note-for-note renditions of such megahits as "Bohemian Rhapsody," "We Are the Champions," "Killer Queen," "You're My Best Friend," "Crazy Little Thing Called Love," "Radio GaGa," "Under Pressure" and "Another One Bites the Dust." Mullen, who channels the late Freddie Mercury, is a lifelong fan who in 2000 entered—and won—ITV Grenada's *Stars in their Eyes* competition program performing as the theatrical rocker with the four-octave vocal range. No less an expert than Brian May, former lead guitarist for Queen, opined that Mullen "shares more than a likeness to Freddie." Encouraged, Mullen assembled The Works—which encompasses Davie Brockett on guitar, Jonathan Evans on drums, Billy Moffat on bass and Malcolm Gentles on keyboards—in 2002. The group has been touring the world ever since, re-creating the look, sound and showmanship of what is unquestionably one of the greatest rock bands of all time.



NIÑA PASTORI

Camino Tour

Sunday, May 5 | 7:30 p.m.

Steinmetz Hall | Tickets start at \$61.99

Andalusia-born singer and songwriter Niña Pastori—the daughter and great-granddaughter of flamenco singers—first took the stage at age 8 and went on to forge a quarter-century career that has resulted in four Latin Grammys and two Dial Awards (presented by Madrid-based radio station Cadena Dial to the most successful Spanish-language recording artists of the prior year), as well as gold and platinum records in Spain, Colombia and Argentina. Her eclectic style combines traditional Spanish musical influences such as flamenco with contemporary pop, rock and jazz. Now on her 25th anniversary tour, Pastori is promoting *Camino*, her most recent album, which was described by *Billboard* as "full of emotions embodied in positive and optimistic songs." For this

tour, a portion of ticket-sale proceeds will benefit philanthropic activities undertaken by the Miami-based live-event promotion company Loud and Live, which supports programs to further international appreciation for the contributions of Latin music and its makers via scholarships, grants and educational programs.



RAIN: A TRIBUTE TO THE BEATLES

Sunday, May 5 | 8 p.m.
Walt Disney Theater
Tickets start at \$30

Beatlemaniacs of all ages will find much to love about *RAIN: A Tribute to the Beatles*, which is essentially a chronological history of the band relayed through its timeless songs. The multimedia production—which ran on Broadway for 300 shows in 2010 and

2011—features high-definition backdrops that show psychedelic effects, vintage television commercials and video footage of *RAIN* cast members re-creating iconic Beatle moments. For legal reasons, *RAIN* doesn't use the names of the actual members of the Beatles for its cast—but the talented players mirror their counterparts with such precision (visually and vocally) that the Associated Press has called the lavish production "the next best thing to seeing the Beatles." Fans will follow the Fab Four along a long and winding road through all their phases, from the wholesome mop-tops who had the kids screaming on the *Ed Sullivan Show* through their mid-'60s excursions into psychedelia and finally through the legendary "Get Back" sessions that preceded their breakup. | Presented by Morgan Stanley Moments at Dr. Phillips Center.



SHEN YUN 2024

Wednesday–Saturday, May 8–11
7:30 p.m. (Wednesday, Friday, Saturday),
2 p.m. (Thursday, Saturday)
Walt Disney Theater | Tickets start at \$95

Shen Yun means "the beauty of divine beings dancing," or "the rhythm of a divine spirit" or, more simply, "God's melody." The Shen Yun Performing Arts organization, founded in 2006, has six touring companies, each of which encompasses about 40 dancers who trained at the Fei Tian Academy in upstate New York. Shen Yun performances feature these graceful and elaborately clad dancers, who are accompanied by an equally large orchestra that incorporates Chinese instruments such as the pipa (comparable to a lute), the erhu (a two-stringed vertical violin) and the suona (a double-reeded horn). Adding to the spectacle is an enormous screen upon which digital backdrops—ancient temples, royal gardens, the



cosmos—appear as the troupe enacts Chinese dance stories drawn from 5,000 years of the country's history. Orlando audiences—audiences everywhere, really, except in China, where the show isn't allowed because of its spiritual themes—can't get enough of Shen Yun, which is returning for the eighth year, this time with five shows.

Orlando Ballet dancers
John Abenanty and
Anamarie McGinn.



CASANOVA

Presented by Orlando Ballet

Thursday–Sunday, May 16–19

7:30 p.m. (Thursday, Friday, Saturday), 2:30 p.m. (Sunday)

Steinmetz Hall | Tickets start at \$29

Recommended for ages 18-plus

Giacomo Casanova is surely the world's most legendary womanizer. But he was also an intellectual, a gambler and a scofflaw—all appropriate character traits around which to design a lusty ballet that crackles with sexual tension. Kenneth Tindall—choreographer in residence at Northern Ballet in Leeds, West Yorkshire, England—has created a larger-than-life ballet experience set in 18th-century Venice, with sumptuous sets and costumes and bold choreography that describes how Casanova's plans for a career in Holy Orders was derailed by his own decadence. This award-winning production, which originated in the U.K., has not yet been staged in North America. Its tour here was made possible through a collaboration between Orlando Ballet, Colorado Ballet and Milwaukee Ballet. Says Artistic Director Jorden Morris: "This is the future of making big, expensive, lavish ballets more accessible to the public as a compliment to the standard classics already available." Guest Conductor Julian Pellicano will return to lead the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra through a captivating score by Kenneth Muzzy. Casanova is an aptly over-the-top way to wrap up Orlando Ballet's 50th Anniversary Season.

CONSIDERING MATTHEW SHEPARD

Presented by Orlando Sings

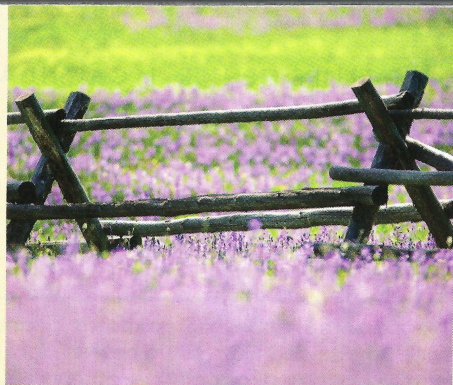
Saturday & Sunday, June 1 & 2

8 p.m. (Saturday), 2 p.m. (Sunday)

Alexis & Jim Pugh Theater

Tickets start at \$39.50

Matthew Shepard, a gay student at the University of Wyoming, was beaten, tortured, tied to a split-rail fence and left to die near Laramie on the night of October 6, 1998. His horrific murder eventually resulted in the expansion of federal hate crime laws to include crimes motivated by a victim's disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. Shepard's story also inspired—and continues to inspire—creative works, including plays and films. Among the most evocative is 2016's *Considering Matthew Shepard*, a Grammy-nominated fusion oratorio by Craig Hella Johnson, a composer-in-residence at Texas State University. Solaria, the professional ensemble of Orlando



Sings—a nonprofit consortium of choral groups—will present this searing work fully staged, with soloists, projections and a chamber orchestra. Shepard's story will also be told through poetry and readings from Shepard's personal journals. Says Johnson: "In composing *Considering Matthew Shepard*, I wanted to create, within a musical framework, a space for reflection, consideration and unity around his life and legacy." Andrew Minear, founding artistic director of Orlando Sings, will be the local production's music director.



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HAUSER***Rebel With a Cello*****Sunday, June 2 | 7 p.m.****Walt Disney Theater | Tickets start at \$44.50****VIP PACKAGES AVAILABLE**

Croatia-born Stjepan Hauser (known to fans as simply Hauser) is a rock star with a cello. Since he decided to create a new musical experience by combining the traditions of classical, pop and rock music, Hauser has played festival and arena concerts in more than 40 countries, defying conventions and winning fans. He became a sensation in the United States in 2011, when he and fellow cellist Luka Šulić—who were then a crossover duo aptly called 2Cellos—appeared as musical guests on Fox's hit TV series *Glee*, where they performed Michael Jackson's "Smooth Criminal." The song debuted at No. 10 on the Billboard Hot 100 Digital Songs Chart and landed the pair's self-titled debut album in the Top 100. After 2Cellos disbanded (amicably) in 2018, Hauser focused on a solo career and two years later released his first solo album, *Hauser Classic*, backed by the London Symphony Orchestra. Then, unable to tour in support of the album due to pandemic restrictions, he released three live-streamed music videos from various locations in Croatia, each of which were called *Hauser: Alone Together*. The visually and musically stunning creations helped push *Hauser Classic* to No. 1 on the Billboard Classical Albums Chart. The so-called "bad boy of stringed instruments" is nothing if not eclectic: He has also toured with Elton John and collaborated with Andrea Bocelli, George Michael, the Red Hot Chili Peppers and U2. His YouTube page has notched nearly 800 million views.



BLUEY'S BIG PLAY

The Stage Show

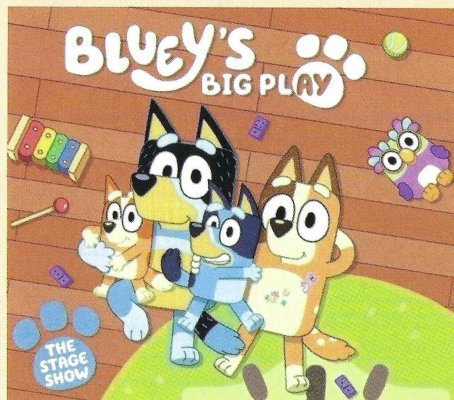
Saturday & Sunday, June 15 & 16

11 a.m. & 2 p.m.

Walt Disney Theater | Tickets start at \$29.50

VIP PACKAGES AVAILABLE

Grab the sticky geckos, break out the duck cakes and alert the grannies! If you know what any of that means, then you've got kids who are enthralled with *Bluey*, the popular animated series—created in Australia—for preschoolers. The cartoon, which streams on Disney Junior and related platforms, follows the adventures of an anthropomorphic Blue Heeler puppy and her family, including Bandit, the father; Chilli, the mother; and Bingo, the younger sister. *Bluey* has won the International Emmy Kids Award in the preschool category and the Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts Award for Best Childrens' Program for four consecutive years. Plus, in 2023 *Bluey* received its fifth



Kidscreen Award as Best Animated Series from *Kidscreen Magazine*. The stage production, which features life-sized puppets, is based on an original story written by *Bluey* creator Joe Brumm and features new music by *Bluey* composer Joff Bush. A *Broadway World* critic called it "one of the best children's theaters shows I have ever seen." | *Family at Dr. Phillips Center is supported by Experience Kissimmee.*

HARRY POTTER AND THE DEATHLY HALLOWS: PART 1 IN CONCERT

With the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra

Friday & Saturday, June 21 & 22

7 p.m. (Friday), 1 & 7 p.m. (Saturday)

Walt Disney Theater | Tickets start at \$45.50

CineConcerts, one of the world's leading producers of live musical experiences based on popular films, is again inviting fans to the world of wizardry for an evening of music and magic in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. The film, based on J.K. Rowling's seventh and final Harry Potter novel, was released in two parts—the first in 2010 and the second in 2011—so fans will likely have one additional new concert to anticipate next year. Meanwhile the 2010 release, directed by David Yates, will be shown on a gigantic screen while Alexandre Desplat's epic score is performed live by the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra—members of which by now surely know the series as well as Rowling herself. The first installment of *Deathly Hallows* finds the young wizard, now age 17, and his friends Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger seeking to find and destroy Lord Voldemort's Horcruxes (objects used to store part of a person's soul, thereby protecting that person from death). Fans who pack the Potter concerts often show up wearing Hogwarts regalia, and are welcome to cheer and jeer the heroes and villains. | *Family at Dr. Phillips Center is supported by Experience Kissimmee.*



HELLO, DOLLY!

Presented by Encore Performing Arts
Friday & Saturday, June 21 & 22 | 8 p.m.
Steinmetz Hall | Tickets start at \$29

Emmy nominee Jodi Benson—best known for providing the voice of Ariel in Disney's *The Little Mermaid* films—will star in Encore Performing Arts' production of *Hello, Dolly!* The iconic musical, based on Thornton Wilder's 1938 farce *The Matchmaker* (previously *The Merchant of Yonkers*) is a jubilant journey through turn-of-the-century New York with the indomitable Dolly Gallagher Levi, a professional meddler who is seeking a wife for curmudgeonly merchant Horace Vandergelder—but ends up wanting to snare him for herself. Originally directed and choreographed by Gower Champion, *Hello, Dolly!* made history on Broadway in 1964 by clinching 10 Tony Awards, including Best Musical. Encore Performing Arts, an Osceola County-based nonprofit, will donate a portion of the proceeds from



Jodi Benson

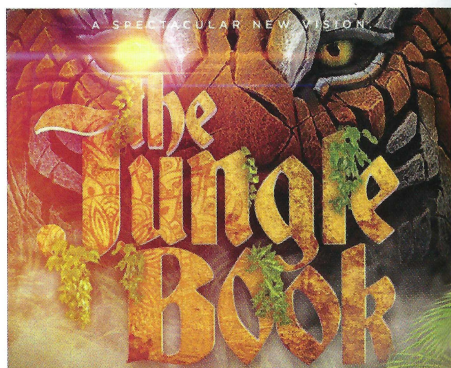
Hello, Dolly! to benefit Give Kids the World Village, an 89-acre nonprofit resort that provides critically ill children and their families with magical weeklong wish vacations at no cost.

THE JUNGLE BOOK

Presented by Modern Theatricals
Friday-Sunday, August 23-25
8 p.m. (Friday),
2 & 8 p.m. (Saturday & Sunday)
Alexis & Jim Pugh Theater
Tickets start at \$85

Shere Khan the Tiger and Mowgli the Boy take center stage in *The Jungle Book*, a spectacular new sequel expanding on the world of Rudyard Kipling's classic tale as adapted by Donald Spencer, founder and director of Orlando-based Modern Theatricals. Beloved for generations, *The Jungle Book* highlights the power of determination, forgiveness and acceptance. Spencer, a former Disney character performer, is known for his unique and immersive theatrical experiences such as *Down the Rabbit Hole*, which was staged in 2021 at Mead Botanical Garden, and *Dragons & Fairies*, which was staged in 2022 at Harry P. Leu Gardens, both in

partnership with Creative City Project. Spencer has specifically designed his most recent creation for the environs of the Alexis and Jim Pugh Theater. The venue's intimate scale will allow guests to be fully immersed in the animal kingdom, highlighted by intricate masks, life-sized puppets, circus art and dance and music inspired by Bollywood.





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AUSTRALIAN PINK FLOYD

Wednesday, August 28 | 8 p.m.

Walt Disney Theater | Tickets start at \$39

VIP PACKAGES AVAILABLE

The most spectacular Pink Floyd show on the planet certainly hasn't hit a wall (or *The Wall*) careerwise. They've sold more than 5 million tickets across 35 countries and have been dubbed "the gold standard" of tribute groups by *The Times of London*. Australian Pink Floyd, formed in 1988, is so true to the legendary group—which was considered by many to be the greatest progressive rock band of all time—that they were asked by David Gilmour, the *actual* Pink Floyd's guitarist and co-lead vocalist since 1967, to perform at his birthday celebration. And to think, it all started in Adelaide, where Lee Smith, a guitarist obsessed with Pink Floyd and in the process of putting a band together, posted a flyer in a local music shop that read: "Vocalist and keyboardist required. Professional attitude expected. We only play Pink Floyd." Smith left the band in 1993, but other players—including guitarist and vocalist Steve Mac, an original member—have continued to tour the world, playing uncanny versions of Pink Floyd songs and enlivening their concerts with visual aids such as lasers, inflatables and a large display panel similar to "Mr. Screen," a large circular projection panel that became a staple at Pink Floyd concerts back in the day.



BENISE

Fiesta!

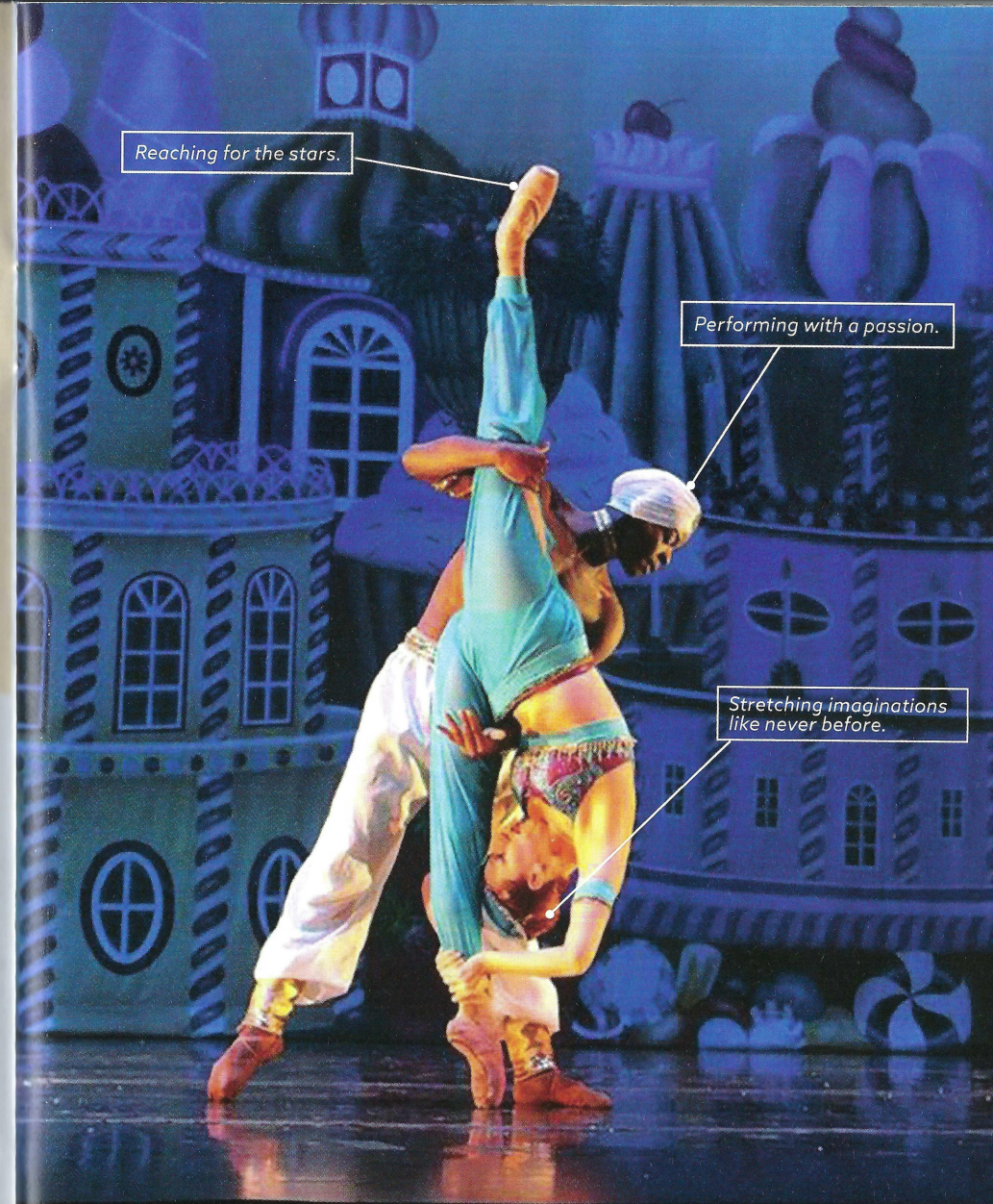
Thursday, September 26 | 7:30 p.m.

Steinmetz Hall | Tickets start at \$44

Get ready for a hot night with Roni Benise, known to his fans as simply Benise (pronounced Buh-nes-say). Known as "The Prince of Spanish Guitar," his playing melds flamenco, salsa, samba and tango styles with a hard-charging rock 'n' roll sensibility. Most of all, though, Benise—who played the arts center last year—is a consummate entertainer who works with a cast of musicians and dancers to present a Latin-themed extravaganza that's both a concert and a musical-theater experience. Given that fact, you might be surprised to learn that the boundary-pushing musician is originally from Ravenna, Nebraska, although he moved to Southern California to pursue rock stardom. There, listening to the radio, he discovered Spanish guitar and embarked on a new artistic direction. Benise, who as a youngster idolized Jimi Hendrix and Led Zeppelin, formed a fusion band and later created a lavish stage show called *Nights of Fire!* that incorporated circus performers, samba dancers



and African drummers. The production aired on PBS in 2006 and won an Emmy for Outstanding Costumes for a Variety or Music Program. In *Fiesta!*, titled for Benise's most recent PBS special—his seventh—he'll stage an elaborate (and electrifying) production that melds music with dance. Expect to hear Benise-style versions of rock anthems by the likes of Led Zeppelin and AC/DC as well as such classics as "Ave Maria," "Moonlight Sonata" and "Summer" from *The Four Seasons*, Vivaldi's violin concerti. | Family at Dr. Phillips Center is supported by Experience Kissimmee. ■



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KNIGHT MOVES

UCF CELEBRATES THE ARTS IN EVERY FORM DURING ITS ANNUAL ARTS CENTER SHOWCASE.

BY RANDY NOLES

Each year, the University of Central Florida commandeers just about every square inch of Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts—including its lobbies and outdoor spaces—to spotlight a slew of the university's arts programs and the talents of students, faculty members and special guests.

This year, UCF Celebrates the Arts—which runs Wednesday through Saturday, April 3 to 14—will mark its 10th anniversary with dancers, singers, instrumentalists, authors, filmmakers, visual artists and much more. Around 15,000 people are expected to see at least one (or probably more) of the offerings scheduled.

In addition, more than 1,000 UCF students will participate, according to producer Michael Wainstein, who is also a theater professor at the school. Another 1,000 or so secondary school students will be involved via choral and orchestral workshops and performances.

"This is a great opportunity to connect our work at UCF with the Central Florida community and for the various art disciplines at UCF to collaborate with one another," says Wainstein, who adds that about 80 percent of attendees have never seen a performance at either the school or the arts center.

The event, hosted under the auspices of the UCF College of Arts and Humanities, features students from the School of Performing Arts and the School of Visual Arts and Design as well as contributions from other academic units—including the humanities and the sciences.

Among the most intriguing offerings this year is *Inclusive Knights: Planes, Trains and Automobiles*, a sensory-friendly concert that

features the UCF Concert Band on Tuesday, April 9, at 11 a.m. in Steinmetz Hall.

Inclusive Knights will offer transport-themed band-concert fare in a welcoming setting for people of all ages who are neurodivergent, such as those on the autism spectrum. For example, an emcee will assure concertgoers that they can move to the music and are welcome to use hearing protection, fidget toys, cushions and other support objects that they bring with them.

Visual representations of the music and text of spoken explanations will be shown on a big screen and those who are deaf or hard of hearing will be provided with helium balloons, which capture the vibrations of musical instruments.

Music education students will interact with audience members and serve as guides to the concert experience. If anyone needs a respite, they'll be welcome to leave their seats and visit a nearby "quiet room."

"The rationale is that not everyone is able to attend a band concert that requires typical band concert behavior," notes Christine Lapka, associate professor of music education at UCF. "So this is a more relaxed environment—and it's so gratifying to watch audience members enjoy themselves."

Another major draw is expected to be a student production of *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, a past and current smash on Broadway, from Thursday to Sunday, April 11 to 14, at 8 p.m. (with a 2 p.m. matinee on Sunday) in Walt Disney Theater.

Sweeney Todd, winner of the 1979 Tony Award for Best Musical and now back on Broadway in a revival starring Josh Groban, is known for its soaring score by Stephen Sondheim and its macabre premise—let's just say



UCF Celebrates the Arts—which will mark its 10th anniversary this year—spotlights the university's arts programs and the talents of students, faculty members and special guests. The annual event is hosted under the auspices of the UCF College of Arts and Humanities, and features art installations, musical performances and theatrical productions just about everywhere you look. About 15,000 people are expected to attend one or more of the offerings scheduled.





Ready to hear works by the next generation of great composers? Then you won't want to miss the National Young Composers Challenge's "Composium" (above left). It's the grand finale of a prestigious nationwide competition that gives teens ages 13 to 18 the opportunity to travel to Orlando and hear their winning musical compositions performed in Steinmetz Hall by the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra. Although about half the programs offered during the two-week celebration are ticketed, many exhibitions and performances in lobby areas (above right) can be viewed free with a ticket to an event inside one of the arts center's venues.

you'll never look at a meat pie in the same way again—which is leavened by romance and dark humor.

The show will be directed by Wainstein—who, coincidentally, auditioned for the original production in New York—and will feature a cast of all students and one faculty member. The accompanying 26-piece orchestra will be led by Richard Crawley, an assistant professor of musical theater and voice.

The two-week celebration will conclude with the National Young Composers Challenge "Composium," the grand finale of a nationwide competition that gives teens ages 13 to 18 the opportunity to travel to Orlando and hear their winning compositions performed in concert by the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra. That's on Sunday, April 14, at noon in Steinmetz Hall.

The Young Composers Challenge, the brainchild of Winter Park philanthropist Steve Goldman, was started in 2005 to encourage talented teenagers and, over a period of time, to establish Central Florida as a nationally recognized incubator for next-generation creators of new music.

Since 2016, UCF has been a co-sponsor. Goldman, an early tech entrepreneur who was himself a musical prodigy, provided the university with an endowment that supports a position within the School of Performing Arts for Alex Burtzos, a professor of music composition who serves as the school's liaison with the highly prestigious competition.

At the Composium, three winning orchestral compositions and three winning ensemble compositions will be performed by the Phil under the baton of Christopher Wilkins, the orchestra's former music director who is now music director of the Akron Symphony and the Boston Landmarks Orchestra.

The teen tunesmiths will be onstage as Wilkins and the players—who see the music for the first time at the event—work out how to tackle each piece. "If you're sitting in the audience, you can literally watch these performances take shape from scratch," says Goldman. When the compositions are played, they last about five minutes.

Goldman adds that a record 137 computer-generated MIDI scores were submitted for evaluation this year. "Some of them

are better than a lot of the adult composers that we know," he says. "And some of them are quite difficult and require extraordinary skill to play."

Although winners get cash prizes of \$1,000 for orchestral pieces and \$500 for ensemble pieces, Goldman believes the real reward is the opportunity youngsters have to hear their works interpreted by a full orchestra (or, in the case of ensembles, by a smaller group) in one of the world's finest concert halls.

The free event—which is fascinating and inspiring on a number of levels—lasts from noon until about 4:30 p.m., and attendees are welcome to come and go as they please. After the final notes are played, there'll be a reception that everyone's invited to attend in the Della Phillips Grand Lobby.

Other highlights of UCF Celebrates the Arts will include *Knight to Shine: A Musical Theater Showcase* as well as performances by The Flying Horse Big Band, Theater for the Very Young, UCF Opera, the UCF Symphony Orchestra, the UCF New Music Ensemble, and a combined concert featuring UCF's Clarinet Ensemble, Flute Knights Ensemble, Saxophone Ensemble and Bassoon Ensemble.

In addition, UCF's large choral ensembles—SoAl, the Chamber Choir and the University Singers—will present *An Evening of Consolation and Hope Featuring Brahms' Requiem*. The work, officially titled *A German Requiem*, was written by the composer as a rumination on grief and healing.

Participatory events during UCF Celebrates the Arts include the UCF Percussion Ensemble Invitational and Concert, the UCF "Music for All" Concert Band Invitational and the National High School Choral Festival.

Irreverent, a student-written play described as "a love letter to all neurodivergent people who are learning to unapologetically be themselves," will also make its debut. The work, by psychology major Hudson Cosgrove-Naftal, was nurtured by a student-run theater organization, Project Spotlight.

UCF Celebrates the Arts is designed to be affordable and accessible; about half the programs are ticketed but many exhibitions in the lobby areas can be viewed free with a ticket to an event inside one of the arts center's venues.

For more information, call 407.823.1500 or visit drphillipscenter.org. ■

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David Spade's comedic gift is making officious jerks seem funny. His contemptuous flight attendant and dismissive receptionist characters were favorites on *Saturday Night Live*.





‘AND YOU ARE ...?’

IT'S DAVID SPADE, THE KING OF SARCASM,
WHOSE ACT REMAINS PROUDLY PRICKLY.

BY STEVE SCHNEIDER

If David Spade, an acknowledged master of sarcasm, isn't funny, who is? That isn't an entirely rhetorical question. The 38-year veteran of the stand-up scene is navigating the same radically shifting cultural landscape as his comedic contemporaries.

It's an environment in which even the most seemingly innocuous gags might well cause outrage and get you accused of being mean-spirited, or worse. The game was so much easier when a comic's job was just to punch in every direction and see what landed.

The sharp-tongued Spade, however, seems to be weathering the sea change smoothly. The legendary former *Saturday Night Live* cast member will appear at Steinmetz Hall—for the second time in 16 months—on Friday, May 3, at 8 p.m. Tickets start at \$45.

Spade, a Michigan native who started on *SNL* as a writer, went on to enjoy a career that transcended his six-year string as a sketch comedian alongside the show's other self-described “bad boys”—most notably

Chris Farley, Chris Rock, Adam Sandler and Rob Schneider.

Today Spade can be seen frequently in films and on TV (both network and streaming). He also cohosts a popular podcast, *Fly on the Wall*, with Dana Carvey, his onetime *SNL* castmate.

On an episode that dropped last January, the duo bemoaned the negative reception that fellow comic Jo Koy had received after hosting this year's Golden Globes. That's the show where attendee Taylor Swift's visibly unimpressed reaction to a joke about her ubiquity at NFL games immediately went viral.

“It's almost like she was pre-offended,” Spade remarked. “It wasn't a burn or anything.” Plus, Spade of all people knows a *real* celebrity burn when he hears one. Rather infamously, he once used his “Hollywood Minute” segment on *SNL* to mock the downward trajectory of Eddie Murphy's film career. (“Look, children! It's a falling star! Make a wish!”)

As Spade remembers in his book, *Almost*



OK, fans of SNL: Here's a challenge for this. This informal photo, taken in 1993, shows Spade and the entire cast plus one executive. Can you correctly identify Phil Hartman, Lorne Michaels, Ellen Cleghorne, Kevin Nealon, Adam Sandler, Chris Farley, Tim Meadows, Mike Myers and Rob Schneider? Extra points to anyone who can ID the people who are unidentified.

Interesting: The Memoir, the result was a phone call from a livid Murphy and a boycott of the show that the "falling star" held to for years. "I try not to think of casualties when I do rough jokes, but there are consequences sometimes," Spade wrote.

Spade's sarcasm, however, is often lightened by self-deprecation. In his 2022 Netflix special, *Nothing Personal*, he poked fun at everything from his fear of crabs to the absurdity of his need to "look cool" when politely turning down drugs.

Humility, after all, is an essential quality to project when you've been a professional success for nearly four decades—and when you enjoy a robust romantic life that once got you described as "the bachelor-era George Clooney of the comedy world" by *E!* News.

"I'm older so I'm not as rough as I was on 'Hollywood Minute' in the old days," Spade recently told the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*. "I make fun of myself more than others. I'm always part of the joke, and I think that helps balance out the times when you go

after other people."

Yet to fans who boarded the Spade train early on, enticed by his appearances on MTV's *Half Hour Comedy Hour* and then *SNL*, that masterfully wrought snarky persona has always been what's so much fun about the comedian.

Indeed, beneath their meanness, there was guilty-pleasure goofiness to some of his recurring *SNL* characters, such as the breezily dismissive receptionist at Dick Clark Productions who greeted even the most famous visitors with a clueless "And you are...?"

Others preferred the contemptuous flight attendant at a second-rate airline who insulted passengers and dismissed their routine questions with an I-could-care-less "buh-bye!" Who among us *hasn't* encountered people who combine rudeness with arrogance? Spade's skill is in making such insufferable jerks seem funny.

He has been at this comedy business for a while—since his college days at Arizona State University, where he performed in sketch troupes while pursuing a degree in business.

He eventually dropped out of college and began playing the club circuit with a stand-up act.

In 1987, after being spotted by a talent agent while performing at The Improv in Los Angeles, Spade was cast in *Police Academy 4: Citizens on Patrol*. Then came that coveted SNL gig, as a writer and then a performer, followed by big-screen comedies in which he played the exasperated foil to Farley's manic manchild in *Tommy Boy* (1995) and *Black Sheep* (1996).

Farley's death in 1997 hit Spade understandably hard: He didn't even attend the funeral, he says, because he was too emotionally overwhelmed.

He has since maintained close personal and professional ties with his other SNL buddies. He has appeared in *The Benchwarmers* (2006) with Schneider and in four animated installments of *Hotel Transylvania* (2012, 2015, 2018 and 2022) with Sandler.

Spade's own films after those with Farley have never been critical favorites, but most have made money and two were massive hits: *Grown Ups* (2010) grossed more than \$272 million and spawned an equally successful sequel, *Grown-Ups 2* (2013). His most recent films have been made for Netflix.

Yet there was no critical/commercial disconnect over the role that may forever qualify as Spade's most watched and awarded. For seven seasons, he played executive assistant Dennis Finch on NBC's *Just Shoot Me!*, an ensemble comedy set at a fictional fashion magazine called *Blush*.

That role, which netted an Emmy nomination and two Golden Globes, saw Spade return to obnoxious functionary mode as the very odd executive assistant to Jack Gallo (George Segal), the magazine's owner and publisher. *Just Shoot Me!* ran for six seasons.

In 2018, Spade notched his first major dramatic role in the indie thriller *Warning Shot*, which co-starred Bruce Dern and James Earl Jones. Spade played the dangerous

grandson of a powerful business tycoon (Dern) and, according to most critics, held his own alongside the veteran character actors who populated the film.

Spade's non-scripted projects have included *Lights Out with David Spade*, a Comedy Central talk show that didn't survive the pandemic, and the current Fox entry *Snake Oil*, a kind of tongue-in-cheek *Shark Tank* that has contestants guessing which ingenious inventions are real and which are fake.

And then there's the road. Spade played 29 live engagements last year, and at press time, his 2024 "Catch Me Inside" tour schedule was already at 22 dates and counting, with shows from Seattle to Clearwater.

Spade's advice for anyone who doesn't know how to respond to his material—or that of any provocative comedian—is that it's essential to separate entertainment from endorsement. In other words, to learn how to take a joke.

"These aren't my hardcore beliefs," he told *The Hollywood Reporter*. "This is me saying something to shock or surprise you to elicit a laugh. If I say the five jokes we're all allowed to say that have been approved by the world, then who's laughing?" ■

GET YOUR TICKETS

EVENT: David Spade: *Catch Me Inside*

DATE/TIME: Friday, May 3, 8 p.m.

VENUE: Steinmetz Hall

NOTES: The *Saturday Night Live* veteran, who has subsequently starred in hit movies, brings his legendary snark to Central Florida.

TICKETS: Prices start at \$45

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IN FACT

Spade, playing to type, appeared in commercials for Capital One (with Nate Torrence) in which he played the employee of a fictional rival company whose policy toward honoring credit card rewards (and just about everything else) was "always no."

The jazz ensemble Eighth Element, which played during opening events at Judson's Live, featured two members—Jack and Jacob Kaiser—who are grandsons of the late Judson Green, for whom the venue is named.





dr. phillips
center

GRAND OPENING

MUSIC! MUSIC! MUSIC!

A jewel-box venue, Judson's Live invites guests to eat, drink, listen and revel in the big-city vibe.

BY RANDY NOLES

The late Judson Green's presence was very much felt during the Grand Opening Celebration of the Joyce & Judson Green Room—more informally dubbed Judson's Live—which debuted with a month-long slate of eclectic performers in February.

Sleek and sophisticated, Judson's Live—the arts center's fifth venue—offers an elegant, elevated experience that combines live music with craft cocktails and curated cuisine in an intimate, elegant 140-seat space where the walls are crafted from etimoe, a richly hued hardwood from West Africa.

The place is indeed a visual (as well as an aural) feast. Cozy, white-topped tables with blue swivel chairs fill the room, while banquette seating spans the back wall. Behind the long, marble-topped bar stands a shelved assortment of top-tier scotches, cognacs, bourbons, wines and spirits.

The lights—which resemble luminous floating guitar picks—can dim and brighten from cool blue to warm pink, and the modestly elevated stage is just steps from the audience. "This is a music room," says Kathy Ramsberger, the arts center's president and CEO. "It's for people who love all kinds of music."

That descriptor would certainly apply to Green—formerly president of Walt Disney Attractions—who was a serious and accomplished pianist.

Even as an economics and music composition major at DePauw University (Green-

castle, Indiana), the man for whom the buzzy new venue was named would play weekend gigs with such performers as Bobby Vinton and Pat Boone. Later he would record several jazz albums of his own.

Both Green and his wife, Joyce, served on the arts center's board of directors (Joyce still does) and later became lead donors for what was originally called simply the Green Room—meant to be a rehearsal space for touring performers.

However, after the arts center established a relationship with New York City's Jazz at Lincoln Center (JALC) in 2004, plans for the space became more ambitious. By 2007, arts center leaders were gathering ideas by visiting legendary music rooms across the country.

Their field trips included The Blue Note in New York City's Greenwich Village and The Elephant Room in Austin, Texas, among others. They were particularly impressed with Dizzy's Club, an intimate JALC venue that offers live jazz performances and a creative seasonal menu.

Ramsberger—who realized that performers just weren't excited about warming up in a stageless rehearsal hall—suspected that there would be local support for a small but stylish venue inspired by other notable music rooms and yet reflective of the arts center's unique aesthetic.

The Greens, who had notched multiple visits to Dizzy's Club at the invitation of JALC Artistic Director Wynton Marsalis, agreed



The mixologists behind the distinctive marble-topped bar at Judson's Live keep busy serving up craft cocktails and fine wines. Behind the bar are 30 scotches, six cognacs and 45 bourbons along with other spirits.



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Judson's LIVE

ambiance, guests may be pleasantly surprised when they investigate buying tickets. Prices vary depending upon who's performing—but many concerts offer single tickets from just \$30. There's a one-drink minimum.

Guests are seated by a host at two-top or four-top tables, so parties of three or fewer may be seated with other guests. Hosts will make every effort to seat parties of two at a two-top. Bar seating is also available.

"It's all about the guest experience," says Ramsberger of Judson's Live, a jewel box of a venue that reflects the arts center's overarching guest-centric standards of quality. "This is a room where you can enjoy who you're with while you're enjoying the music."

The opening of Judson's Live marks the completion of the arts center's Phase 2 expansion, which included the debut of Steinmetz Hall in 2022. And yes, there's a Phase 3 planned for the nine-acre campus. Components are expected to include additional venues—among them an amphitheater—as well as a fast-casual café and event space on a roof garden.

For the opening of Judson's Live, there are plenty of kudos to go around. In addition to the Greens' donation, significant gifts came from Irving Matthews, Donna and Bill Wehner, and Jacqueline Bradley and Clarence Ofis. Orange County and the City of Orlando also contributed.

The Grand Opening—which featured sold-out shows and earned rave reviews from guests and artists alike—was supported by Joyce T. Green & Family, Chuck and Margery Pabst Steinmetz, Frances and Peter Weldon, Brasfield & Gorrie, Walt Disney World Resort and McGriff Insurance.

"After looking at renderings for so long it's just amazing to me to see the completed space and how everything turned out even better than the renderings," says Joyce Green, herself an accomplished pianist and innovative keyboard educator who majored in musical performance at DePauw. "I'm thrilled. I believe that Judson would be very happy about how it all turned out."

There's no doubt about that. Disney cast members still recall how Green would casually drop in to play the piano at locations such as Pleasure Island Jazz Company, where audiences had no idea that the man tickling the ivories for their entertainment also ran the company. ■

Following are the performers who've been booked from April forward for concerts. More bookings are always being added, so check frequently for updates. Advance tickets may be purchased at JudsonsLive.org. Walk-ups may be accommodated subject to availability at the Bill & Mary Darden Box Office, 445 South Magnolia Avenue.

TATIANA EVA-MARIE

**Friday & Saturday, April 5 & 6
7 & 9 p.m.**

Tickets start at \$35

Eva-Marie, dubbed "the Gypsy-jazz warbler" by *The New York Times*, explores the music of composer Django Reinhardt through her own original arrangements and lyrics.

STEPHANE WREMBEL

Sunday, April 7 | 5 & 7:30 p.m.

Tickets start at \$35

Guitarist Wrembel spans genres with music that incorporates jazz, blues, classical, swing, flamenco and rock. His composition "Bistro Fada" became the theme song for Woody Allen's film *Midnight in Paris* (2011).

BYWATER CALL

Thursday, April 11 | 7 & 9 p.m.

Tickets start at \$29.50

Bywater Call is a roof-rattling southern rock and soul band that delivers heartfelt Americana music with funk, grease and grit. In 2022, they were featured on the main stage at the Moulin Blues Festival in the Netherlands.

COMING SOON

HAROLD LÓPEZ-NUSSA

Timba a la Americana

Friday, April 12 | 7 & 9 p.m.

Tickets start at \$45

López-Nussa, a Cuba-born pianist and composer, is joined by his three-piece band to celebrate *Timba a la Americana*, an album that's been described as "a top-to-bottom modernization of Latin jazz."

BRANDEE YOUNGER

Saturday, April 13 | 7 & 9 p.m.

Tickets start at \$40

Younger, who is revolutionizing the harp for the digital era, made history in 2022 by becoming the first Black woman to earn a Grammy nomination for Best Instrumental Composition.

MELISSA ALDANA

Thursday-Saturday, April 25-27

7 & 9 p.m.

Tickets start at \$40

Aldana's 2019 album *Visions* (Motéma) earned the saxophonist her first-ever Grammy nomination for Best Improvised Jazz Solo. She recently released a new album, *12 Stars*, on Blue Note Records.

ALEX CUBA

Wednesday, May 15 | 7 & 9 p.m.

Tickets start at \$35

Cuba's sugarcane-sweet melodies, pop-soul hooks and powerful guitar riffs have won the guitarist Juno Awards, Latin Grammys and the Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada's Hagood Hardy Award for Outstanding Achievement in Jazz and World Music.

TAL COHEN

Featuring Ignacio Berroa

Thursday-Saturday, May 16-18

7 & 9 p.m.

Tickets start at \$35

Cohen is a Grammy-winning jazz pianist whose recent album *Gentle Giants* earned a 4-star review from *Downbeat Magazine*. Berroa, a legendary drummer, performed with Dizzy Gillespie for more than a decade as well as stints with Chick Corea, Wynton Marsalis and Tito Puente.

THE GUESTS

Thursday-Saturday, May 2-4

7 & 9 p.m.

Tickets start at \$35

Powerhouse vocalist Lucy Woodward and music director Henry Hey—who have backed such stars as Rod Stewart, David Bowie, George Michael and Snarky Puppy—offer stripped-down but powerful takes on classic pop, rock and soul tunes.

MICHAEL MAYO

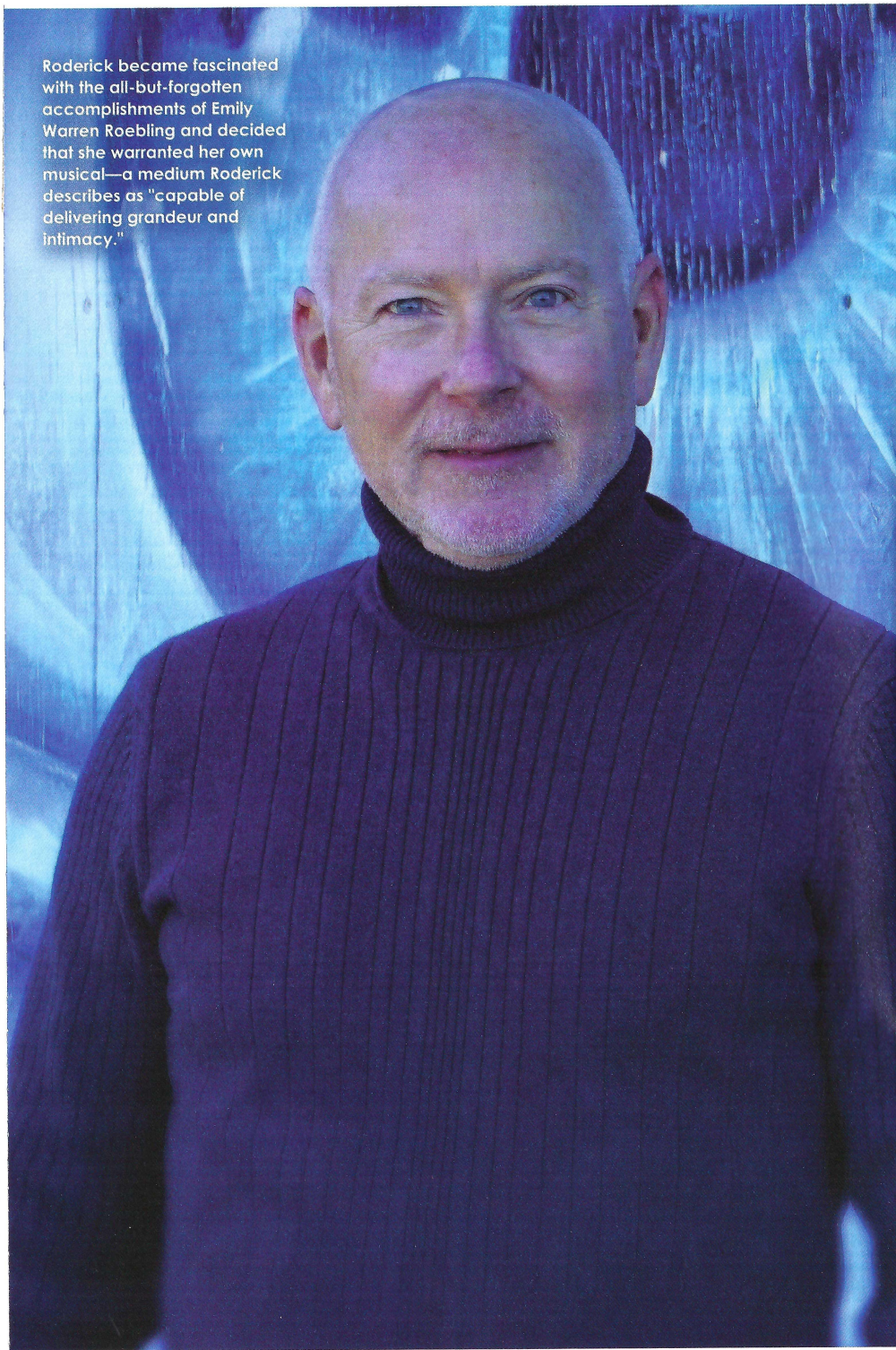
Thursday-Saturday, June 20-22

7 & 9 p.m.

Tickets start at \$35

Vocalist Mayo, a rising star who studied at the New England Conservatory of Music and the Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz (Mayo later toured with Hancock) has just released his first solo album, *Bones*, which defies genres with jazz, pop and hip-hop influences.

Roderick became fascinated with the all-but-forgotten accomplishments of Emily Warren Roebling and decided that she warranted her own musical—a medium Roderick describes as “capable of delivering grandeur and intimacy.”





BUILDING 'BROOKLYN'S BRIDGE'

APPLAUSE AWARDS DIRECTOR WORKSHOPS A
NEW MUSICAL DURING ARTS CENTER RESIDENCY.

New York-based director and choreographer Ray Roderick has directed the Applause Awards extravaganza for the past two years. This Tony-style event showcases hundreds of high school musical-theater students who compete for an opportunity to represent Central Florida and the arts center in New York City at the Jimmy Awards.

"I'm always blown away by the level of talent in Orlando," says Roderick. "If that's the caliber of performers you find in high school, then what will you find when these kids have grown up?"



The Brooklyn Bridge (above, under construction) is today considered a marvel of engineering. Emily Warren Roebling (left) became the de facto chief engineer when her husband, Washington, became debilitated.

The owner of Miracle or 2 Productions—a theatrical production and licensing company—found talent galore in January, when he prepared for a reading of a new musical, *Brooklyn's Bridge*, during a two-week residency at the arts center. "We used only local actors," says Roderick. "We didn't feel like we needed to bring anyone from New York."

Brooklyn's Bridge—for which Roderick wrote the book and lyrics and composer Joseph Baker wrote the music—is the second musical in development that the arts center has taken under its wing. The first was *Grace*, the story of an African American family struggling to hold on to a family-owned restaurant after the death of a beloved matriarch.

"As part of our mission, we're providing space where new shows can be tested and unveiled, where innovation can unfold and collaboration can truly drive creative success," says Kathy Ramsberger, president and CEO of the arts center.

Brooklyn Bridge's was inspired by the true story of Emily Warren Roebling, whose husband, Washington, was chief engineer in charge of the bridge's construction.

However, Washington became debilitated due to a case of "the bends" after diving into the East River to help extinguish flames in a pneumatic caisson—a pressurized box that allowed workers to descend



into the depths and reach the riverbed where the bridge's foundations were set.

As her husband's condition worsened, Emily—who had studied bridge construction by assisting her husband—stepped in and for 14-plus years directly supervised progress of what was one of the greatest architectural feats of the 19th century.

Roebling's all-but-forgotten story as the massive project's de facto chief engineer was highlighted in the 2022 HBO period drama *The Gilded Age*. Roderick, however, is no newcomer to this saga of brilliant engineering, sleazy politics and unconventional gender roles.

"For over 15 years, I've been infatuated with the mind behind the Brooklyn Bridge," he says. "And as we delved deeper into Emily's life and the bridge's history, the idea of conveying this narrative as a musical—a medium capable of simultaneously delivering grandeur and intimacy—resonated deeply."

The show has been honed through several staged readings and one full production at Montclair State University in 2021. Because of the pandemic, it was recorded—using eight cameras, like a TV show—and posted online during the college's Virtual Festival.

The local cast, which workshoped scenes and songs onstage at the Alexis & Jim Pugh Theater, consisted of six principals and a slightly larger ensemble. (A play is workshoped when potential changes are discussed and tested for effect prior to a formal staging.)

The story is told through the eyes of legendary political cartoonist Thomas Nast, who was played by Janine Papin, fine arts director at Winter Park's Trinity Prep. Papin's father, coincidentally, worked as a political cartoonist.

Three local actresses shared the challenging role of Emily, including Kristen Sheola, a theme-park veteran who now teaches at

Disney Imagination Campus. Other principals included Adam Paul (Washington Roebling), Brian Love (Frank Farrington), Grant Norman (William C. Kingsley) and John Cavazos (William "Boss" Tweed).

Of course, Roderick's ultimate goal is to polish the show to the extent that it can be published and licensed for performances or—always the ultimate dream—that it could wind up one of these days on Broadway.

"You're really never finished with a show," says Roderick, who notes that some works take a decade or longer from development to opening night on the Great White Way. "Rewrites always continue. We just need to keep moving forward."

Brooklyn's Bridge will have a head start thanks to the arts center, which is more than just a collection of venues. It's also an incubator of creativity where promising shows can find their groove and, hopefully, pack houses everywhere for years to come.

Support for the arts center's initiative came from the Florida Division of Arts and Culture and Lieutenant General Mark Hertling and Sue Hertling. ■

—Randy Noles



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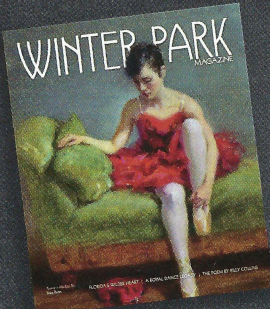
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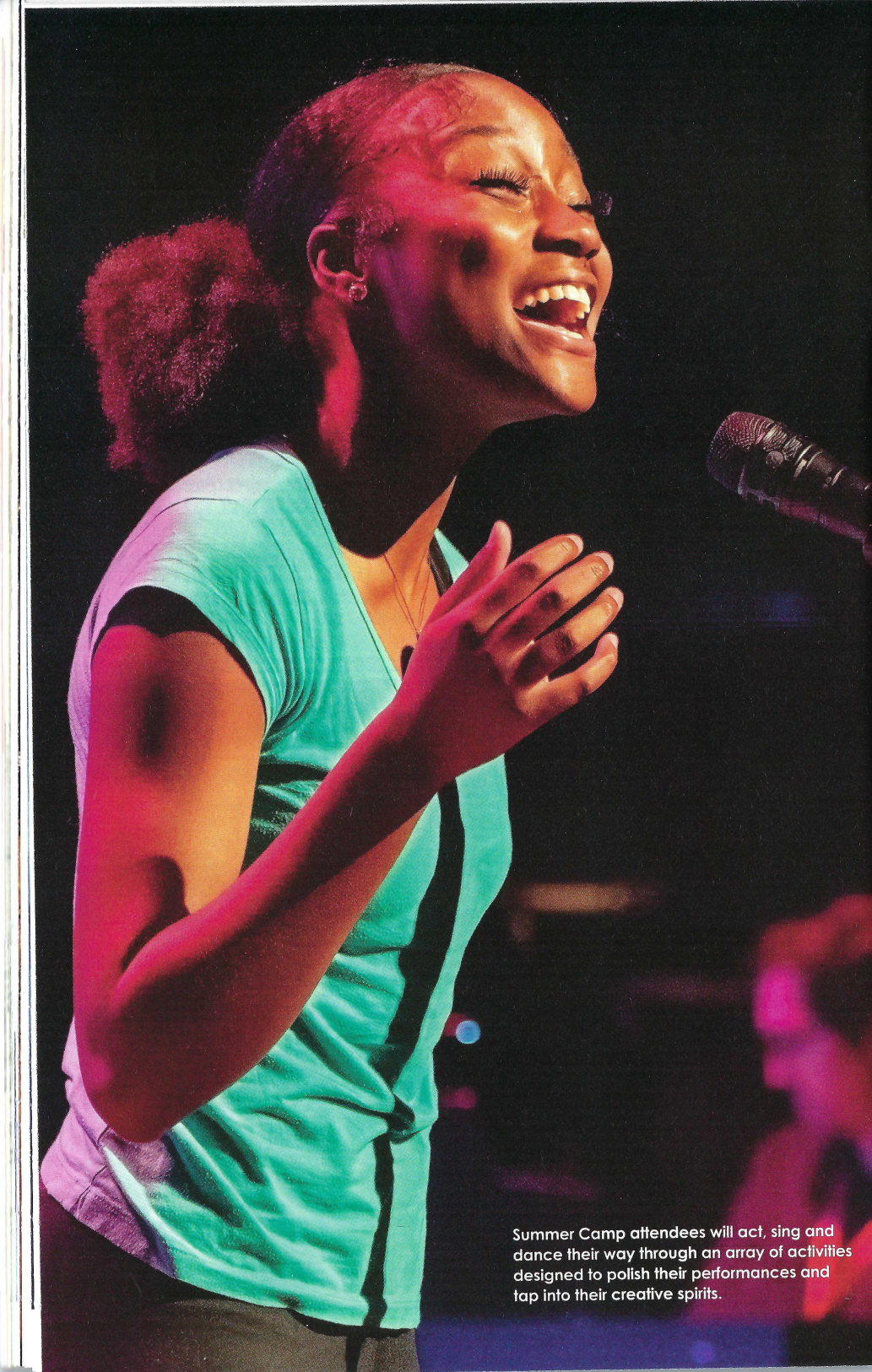




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Summer Camp attendees will act, sing and dance their way through an array of activities designed to polish their performances and tap into their creative spirits.



SUDDENLY, THIS SUMMER

CAMPS AND PRODUCTIONS HELP YOUNG PERFORMERS
HONE THEIR SKILLS AND PURSUE THEIR DREAMS.

BY RANDY NOLES

On a scale of 1 to 10, the creativity quotient is about to hit 11 in downtown Orlando. That's because Dr. Phillips Center's AdventHealth School of the Arts is ramping up for its annual Summer Camps—where students of all ages and skill levels attend weeklong explorations of performance genres that range from comedy to musical theater.

Campers will act, dance and sing their way through an array of top-tier—and hands-on—activities. Plus, there'll be a full-scale Youth Theater musical production, *Mean Girls: High School Version*, in Steinmetz Hall. (Apart from the Summer Camps, there'll also be a Summer Stock musical production of *Rent* with a cast of college-aged actors.)

Certainly, the Summer Camps offer something for everyone. A highlight will be *Take It From The Top*, led by dancer and choreographer Paul Canaan. Through the program—co-founded in 2007 by Canaan and actress Laura Bell Bundy—youngsters at performing arts centers around the country are offered workshops and professional mentoring.

In 2017, Canaan founded The Original Production, a not-for-profit company that films choreography instructions from Broadway

shows. The choreography is then licensed to school, regional and community theaters.

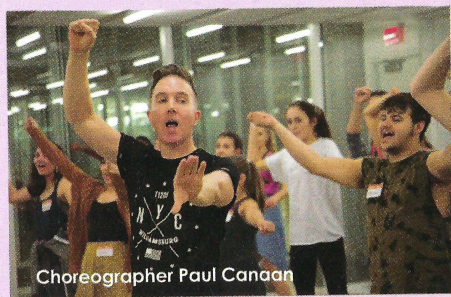
Although he now concentrates on educational ventures, Canaan spent 15 years as a busy working performer whose Broadway credits include *Miss Saigon*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *La Cage Aux Folles*, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* and *Legally Blonde*. Bundy has also appeared in *Legally Blonde* as well as *Wicked*, *Hairspray* and *Ruthless*.

In addition to *Take It From The Top*, other Summer Camps will include an Improv Intensive with SAK Comedy Lab, *Best of Broadway*, *The Magic of Disney* and Universal's *Trolls World Tour* and *More*. All will culminate with showcases at one of the arts center's venues.

On the following pages are descriptions of the various Summer Camps. Tuition is lower if you register on or before Friday, April 19. Names will go on wait lists when capacity is reached—which usually happens quickly—so be sure to register early.

For more information or to register, visit drphillipscenter.org/camps or call 407.455.5551. All that said, here's what the arts center has in store for the steamy dog days to come. ■

SUMMER CAMPS



TAKE IT FROM THE TOP

Take It From The Top is designed by Broadway veterans Paul Canaan (*Kinky Boots*, *Legally Blonde*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *La Cage Aux Folles*, *Miss Saigon*) and Tony nominee Laura Bell Bundy (*Legally Blonde*, *Wicked*, *Hairspray*, *Ruthless*). Learn the "triple threat" of music, dance and acting. Plus, get perspectives on auditions, casting and rehearsals through mentorships from performers, directors, choreographers and a casting industry professional. The weeklong camp will culminate with a showcase in Steinmetz Hall.

AGES: 10–18

DATES/TIMES: June 10–14, 9 a.m.—4 p.m.

FINAL SHOWCASE: June 14, 6 p.m., Steinmetz Hall

TUITION: \$465 (\$495 starting April 19)

CAPACITY: 90

...

IMPROV INTENSIVE WITH SAK COMEDY LAB

Delve into comedy, stand-up, monologue and improv while working through various acting and improvisational methods with expert improvisers from the legendary SAK Comedy Lab. Learn to share creativity with a scene partner and how to incorporate energy from audiences into performances. The three-day camp will culminate with a showcase in the Alexis & Jim Pugh Theater.

AGES: 10–18

DATES/TIMES: July 8–12, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

FINAL SHOWCASE: July 12, time TBD, Alexis & Jim Pugh Theater

TUITION: \$385 (\$415 starting April 19)

CAPACITY: 75

BEST OF BROADWAY

Calling all singers, dancers and actors! Learn to sing, act and dance to songs from favorite Broadway classics and new works. Expand vocal technique, character development, dance skills and stage presence. The weeklong camp will culminate with a showcase in the Alexis & Jim Pugh Theater.

AGES: 6–10

DATES/TIMES: July 8–12, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

FINAL SHOWCASE: July 12, between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., Alexis & Jim Pugh Theater

TUITION: \$355 (\$385 starting April 19)

CAPACITY: 75

...

THE MAGIC OF DISNEY

Be our guest! Be our guest! Have the adventure of a lifetime as the magic of musical theater comes to life through theatrical performance that combines songs, dialogue, acting and dance. Learn to tell thrilling stories while exploring favorite movies from Walt Disney Productions. The weeklong camp will culminate with a showcase on a professional stage.

AGES: 6–10

DATES/TIMES: July 15–19, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

FINAL SHOWCASE: July 19, between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., location TBA

TUITION: \$355 (\$385 starting April 19)

CAPACITY: 75

...

UNIVERSAL'S TROLLS WORLD TOUR AND MORE

Explore lessons of individuality, friendship, kindness and confidence from such popular Universal DreamWorks films as *Despicable Me*, *Madagascar*, *Shrek* and *Trolls* through script reading, singing and dancing. The weeklong camp will conclude with a showcase in the Alexis & Jim Pugh Theater.

AGES: 6–10

DATES/TIMES: July 22–26, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

FINAL SHOWCASE: July 28, between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., Alexis & Jim Pugh Theater

TUITION: \$355 (\$385 starting April 19)

CAPACITY: 75

MEAN GIRLS

HIGH SCHOOL VERSION

YOUTH THEATER PRODUCTION

Nothing prepared teenaged Cady Heron—who grew up on an African savanna and was homeschooled by her research-scientist parents—to navigate the social hierarchy of a clique-infested high school in Evanston, Illinois. How will this naïve newbie rise to the top of the popularity pecking order? At the behest of a cadre of outsiders, she infiltrates the “Plastics,” a trio of lionized frenemies led by the charming but ruthless Regina George. During the intrigue that follows, life lessons are learned—and catchphrases like “that’s so fetch” enter the lexicon. Adapted from the megahit 2004 film written by Tina Fey, *Mean Girls* was nominated for a staggering 12 Tonys during its Broadway run, and has been recently released as a big-budget theatrical film. The Youth Theater production will be presented for two ticketed performances in Steinmetz Hall after just 80 hours of rehearsal.

AGES: 13–19

AUDITIONS: Once registered, submit a video audition singing a 16/20-bar cut of a selection of your choice in similar style to the show. The video is due June 9 and may be emailed to auditions@drphillips.org.

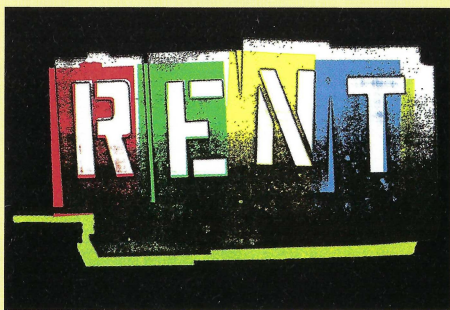
DATES/TIMES: June 17–28 (No rehearsal June 22 or 23), 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

PERFORMANCES: June 28 & 29, 7:30 p.m., Steinmetz Hall

TUITION: \$625 (\$655 starting April 19)

CAPACITY: 60

Performances supported by Chick-fil-A Greater Orlando Area.



SUMMER STOCK PRODUCTION

Although it isn't considered to be a Summer Camp since it's geared toward adult actors, the arts center is once again offering a Summer Stock production. This year it's Jonathan Larson's *Rent*, a rock-musical retelling of *La Boheme* set on the Lower East Side of New York as a group of impoverished creatives struggle to live and love under the shadow of HIV/AIDS. It debuted on Broadway in 1996 and ultimately became a pop cultural phenomenon, winning a Tony for Best Musical and a Pulitzer Prize in Drama. Rehearsals begin at 5 p.m. to accommodate the schedules of working cast members. The Summer Stock production will be presented for three ticketed performances in Steinmetz Hall.

AGES: 19–25 (Must have completed at least one year of college)

AUDITIONS: Submit a headshot, resumé and audition video of a 32-bar cut of a musical theater piece that fits the show's era. The video is due by June 4 and may be emailed to auditions@drphillipscenter.org. The subject line should read “Rent Audition,” followed by your first initial and last name.

DATES/TIMES: July 8–26 (rehearsal), 5–9 p.m.; July 29–August 1 (technical rehearsal), 4–9 p.m.

PERFORMANCES: August 2 & 3, 7:30 p.m., August 4, 3 p.m., Alexis & Jim Pugh Theater



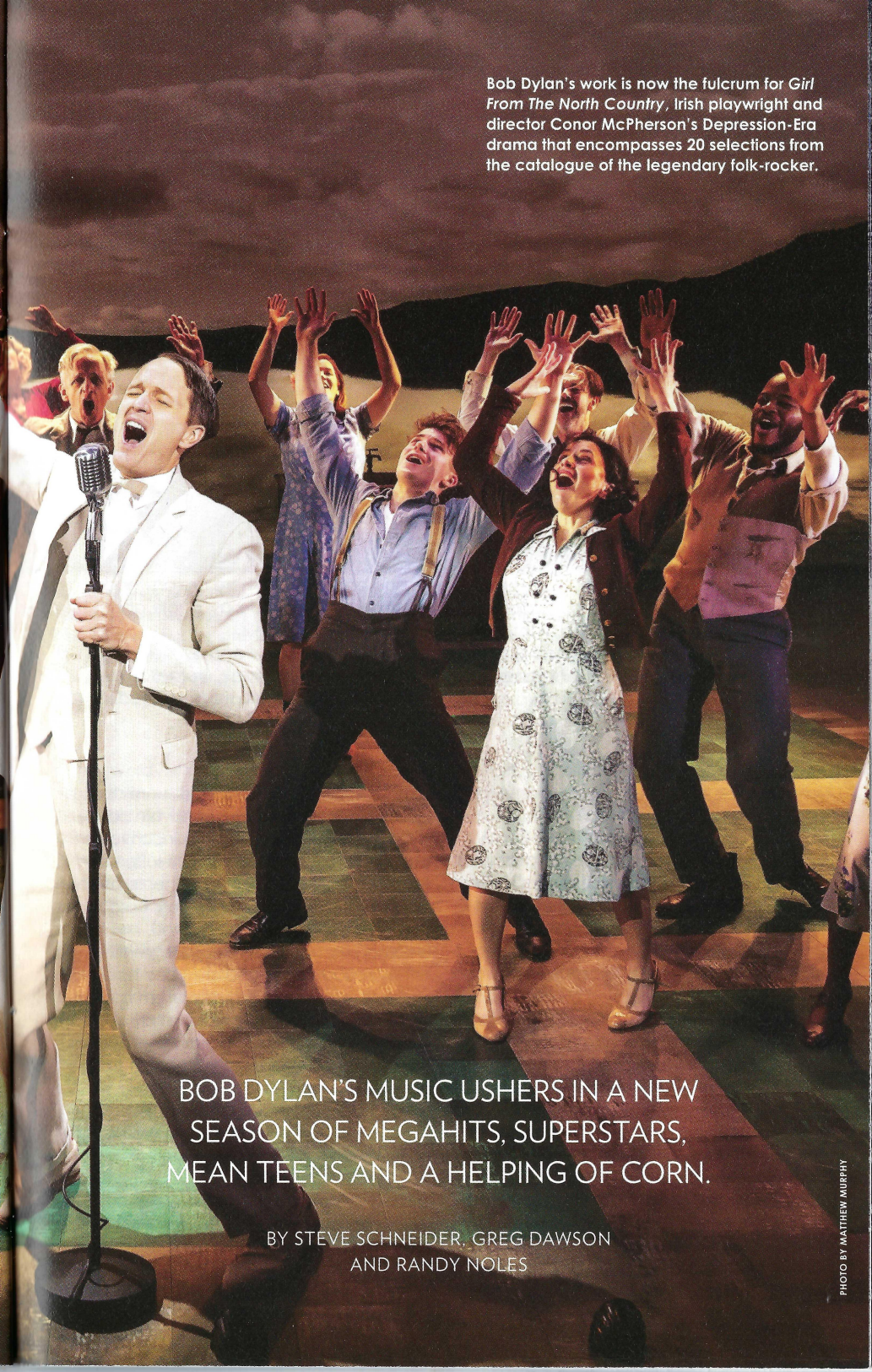
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24/25 BROADWAY SERIES

AdventHealth
BROADWAY IN ORLANDO 
 dr. phillips center



WHERE THE WIND HITS
HEAVY
ON THE BORDERLINE

A group of people, including a man in a white suit and several others in 1930s-style clothing, are singing and dancing on a checkered floor. The man in the white suit is in the foreground, holding a microphone and singing. Behind him, several other people are also singing and dancing, with their arms raised. The background is a dark, cloudy sky.

Bob Dylan's work is now the fulcrum for *Girl From The North Country*, Irish playwright and director Conor McPherson's Depression-Era drama that encompasses 20 selections from the catalogue of the legendary folk-rocker.

BOB DYLAN'S MUSIC USHERS IN A NEW
SEASON OF MEGAHITS, SUPERSTARS,
MEAN TEENS AND A HELPING OF CORN.

BY STEVE SCHNEIDER, GREG DAWSON
AND RANDY NOLES

The 24/25 AdventHealth Broadway in Orlando season—the biggest yet—will open with a Depression-Era drama set to the music of Bob Dylan (*Girl From The North Country*) and close with a corny laugh fest that'll "a-maize" you with its shameless silliness (*Shucked*).

Now *that's* range. In its third year as title sponsor, AdventHealth—along with the arts center, the Florida Theatrical Association and Broadway Across America—will continue its proven formula of presenting an eclectic array of shows that range from classic to contemporary.

Some of them you've seen—and loved—before. Others, though, have never been to Orlando, such as *Girl From The North Country*, which opens the 11-show season (including four season options) on September 24.

The season-ending *Shucked*, a comedy about a rural corn crisis, is also making its local debut. Other shows new to Central Florida are *Some Like It Hot*, a reimagined version of the 1959 Billy Wilder film, and three shows about pop music icons: *The Cher Show* (Cher, of course), *A Beautiful Noise* (Neil Diamond) and *MJ The Musical* (Michael Jackson).

Disney's *The Lion King*, *The Book of Mormon*, *Mean Girls* and a two-night stand for STOMP—an energetic physical theater performance that uses rhythms, acrobatics and pantomime—are season options, meaning that, although they are not included in subscription packages, subscribers are given the first opportunity to buy tickets for these extra added attractions.

In general, here's how ticketing works. First, current season subscriptions may be renewed. Then, new subscriptions are offered. If none are available, you may add your name to the waitlist at broadwayinorlando.com/subscriptions and be notified if there are any openings. Once subscriptions are sold out, tickets for each show will be made available about two months in advance of opening night. (For more details, see page 62.)

For the most up-to-date information, sign up for the arts center's newsletter at drphillipscenter.org or follow its social media updates on Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter) and YouTube. As always, Broadway in Orlando shows are presented in Walt Disney Theater.

GIRL FROM THE NORTH COUNTRY

September 24–29, 2024

The times, they have a'changed. Bob Dylan's work is now the fulcrum for *Girl From The North Country*, Irish playwright and director Conor McPherson's Depression-Era drama that encompasses 20 selections from the catalogue of the legendary folk-rocker (who also won a Pulitzer Prize for Literature in 2008).

Yet this show, reflecting the emotional depth of its score, is decidedly *not* a typical jukebox musical. It's more of a play with music added to amplify the characters or enhance the atmosphere—which is why for every "Like a Rolling Stone" there are at least a few lesser-known nuggets like "Slow Train Coming" and "Tight Connection to My Heart."

At the center of *Girl From The North Country* is down-on-his-luck Nick Laine, who is facing foreclosure on a ramshackle boardinghouse that he runs in Duluth, Minnesota (where Dylan was born).

He is helped in the business, unreliably, by his alcoholic son, Gene, and his adopted daughter, Marianne, who is inconveniently pregnant. Nick's wife, Elizabeth, suffers from a form of dementia that causes her to behave erratically—sometimes speaking hard truths in the midst of manic episodes.

Other disparate Dylanesque misfits who either occupy or visit the crowded house are seeking—what else?—shelter from a (metaphorical) storm. Dark but ultimately uplifting, the show has been hailed as "ravishing and singular" by *The New York Times* and netted seven Tony nominations, including a win for Simon Hale's poignant orchestrations.

Girl From The North Country was a hit in London and off-Broadway before landing on the Great White Way in 2020. (COVID shut down performances after a week but they resumed a year later.)

Sure, Dylan's raspy singing has always been an acquired taste. But in these renditions—where you can actually understand



With *The Book of Mormon*, creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone (*South Park*) and their collaborator, Robert Lopez (*Avenue Q*), crafted an instant classic in which mismatched missionaries—a handsome true believer and a bumbling nerd with a tendency to lie—find the Mormon faith to be a hard sell among locals, who have more immediate concerns such as poverty, famine, warlords and the spread of HIV/AIDs. The young Elders soon learn that they have as much to learn as they have to teach.

every word—the brilliance of his lyrics shines through in such masterpieces as “All Along the Watchtower,” “Like a Rolling Stone,” “Idiot Wind,” “Forever Young” and the haunting title song, which Dylan wrote in 1962 but re-released in 1968 as a duet with country superstar Johnny Cash.

Indeed, one of the show’s highest-profile boosters has been Dylan himself, who—despite having had nothing to do with the production beyond granting access to his repertoire—told the *Times*’ Douglas Brinkley: “The play had me crying at the end. I can’t even say why. When the curtain came down, I was stunned.”

THE BOOK OF MORMON

October 22–27, 2024

SEASON OPTION

The Book of Mormon, a lampoon of well-intended but naïve religious outreach, has become a staple of the American musical theater since its 2011 debut on Broadway.

Short synopsis: Mormon Elders Kevin Price and Arnold Cunningham are sent to bring converts to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in a remote village in Uganda instead of Elder Price’s hoped-for destination, Orlando. (The show even boasts its own song about the City Beautiful, “Orlando.”)

The mismatched missionaries—a handsome true believer (Price) and a bumbling nerd with a tendency to lie (Cunningham), find the Mormon faith to be a hard sell among locals, who have more immediate concerns to deal with—including poverty, famine, warlords and the spread of HIV/AIDs. Consequently, the young Elders soon discover that they have much more to learn about the world than they have to teach about their religion.

With *Book of Mormon*, creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone (*South Park*) and their collaborator, Robert Lopez (*Avenue Q*), crafted an instant, all-time classic that won nine Tonys and was hailed by *The New York Times* as “the best musical of this



Cherilyn Sarkisian, who rose to fame in 1965 as one half of the husband-wife duo Sonny & Cher, won hearts on CBS's *The Sonny & Cher Comedy Hour*, where she cracked jokes at the expense of Sonny Bono and blew the roof off the studio with her distinctive contralto singing voice. So it's no surprise that Cher, who would become a pop culture icon, ultimately conquered Broadway with a Tony-winning jukebox musical.

century" on its way to setting box-office records across the globe.

Wickedly funny gags pepper a story that's certainly bawdy but far more sweet-natured than the uninitiated might expect. The score is full of showstoppers, including the soaring "I Believe"—which is as spirited a declaration of faith as you're likely to hear in the most rapture-filled church of any denomination.

At its heart, in fact, *The Book of Mormon* is about the triumph of faith over fear, as exemplified by Elder Cunningham's absurd seat-of-the-pants explanation of Mormonism—which includes elements of geek-cinema culture that Joseph Smith, the religion's founder, would have found baffling.

Yet, that strange mash-up of Mormonism with characters from modern science fiction and fantasy films wins converts—who are inspired to proselytize and create the paradise on Earth that their new faith promises.

Director and choreographer Jennifer Werner, an associate director on the 2011 New York production, has since led the recent

touring version to international success. So, the fervent faithful and new converts alike should have no hesitation about answering when this particular doorbell rings.

THE CHER SHOW November 12–17, 2024

Cherilyn Sarkisian, who rose to fame in 1965 as one half of the husband-wife duo Sonny & Cher, won hearts on CBS's *The Sonny & Cher Comedy Hour*, where she cracked jokes at the expense of Sonny Bono and blew the roof off the studio with her distinctive contralto singing voice. Now, her stature secure as "The Goddess of Pop," she's still winning hearts 60 years later.

So it's no surprise that Cher (at her level of megastardom, she really only needs one name) would be the subject of a jukebox musical. *The Cher Show* ran on Broadway in 2018 and 2019 and won a pair of Tonys for Stephanie J. Block (Best Lead Actress in a Musical) and Bob Mackie (Best Costume



Now, the updated musical version of *Some Like It Hot* appears poised to join the classic film as a masterpiece of comedy while carving out a place for itself as a groundbreaking exploration of gender roles that transcends the familiar guy-in-heels shtick without getting preachy or losing any laughs. The show was nominated for an astonishing 13 Tonys in 2022—the most of any show that year—and won four. There are some differences between the film and the play that keep it fresh and relevant.

Design for a Musical)).

Since then, the show has been touring the country and taking fans on a journey through Cher's life and music, using three actresses to portray her at different life stages. Each version of Cher is omnipresent, and they interact with one another (including dialogue and some terrific duets) throughout.

There's "Babe," the teen backup singer who becomes a songwriter and teams with Sonny; "Lady," the glamorous Bob Mackie-gowned star whose sardonic persona and soaring vocals highlight *The Sonny & Cher Show*; and "Star," the post-Sonny diva who churns out solo hit records and becomes an Oscar-winning actress (*Moonstruck*, 1988).

Naturally, this being a jukebox musical, you get plenty of jukebox—35 songs in all—along with your cleverly staged biographical exposition.

The score includes "Gypsies, Tramps and Thieves;" "You Better Sit Down, Kids;" "Dark Lady;" "Half-Breed;" and "If I Could Turn Back Time" as well as duets with Sonny ("I Got You

Babe") and second husband Greg Allman ("Just Like Jesse James").

The Cher Show is directed by Casey Hutchison and choreographed by Antoinette DiPietropolo—both of whom are highly credentialed veterans—with book by Rick Elice (*Jersey Boys*, with Marshall Brickman).

Notably, the sequin-laden costumes are by Bob Mackie, the original designer for the Broadway show and the man responsible for real-life Cher's over-the-top ensembles. (Mackie, portrayed by an actor, is even a character in the show.)

SOME LIKE IT HOT

December 17–22, 2024

Some Like It Hot, Billy Wilder's beloved, gender-bending 1959 comedy, remains one of the funniest flicks ever made and was among the first to be selected for preservation in the United States National Film Registry for being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant."



***Mamma Mia!*, which features the hits of ABBA, unfolds on a sunny Greek island, where Donna Sheridan's daughter, Sophie, is about to wed and wants her father to walk her down the aisle. But from reading her mother's diary, Sophie discovers that her father could be any one of three men—and tricks all three into attending the nuptials. Also on the guest list are Donna's gal pals from her "Donna and the Dynamos" girl-group days.**

In the movie—which was nominated for six Oscars and won for Best Costume Design—Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis are Prohibition-Era jazz musicians who witness a mob hit and, in an effort to elude the goons intent on rubbing them out, dress in drag to join an all-female swing band that features Marilyn Monroe as Sugar “Kane” Kowalczyk, the band’s ukulele player and singer.

Now, the updated musical version appears poised to join the classic film as a masterpiece of comedy while carving out a place for itself as a groundbreaking exploration of gender roles that transcends the familiar guy-in-heels schtick without getting preachy or losing any of the laughs.

Certainly, the musical boasts an elite Broadway pedigree, with book by Matthew Lopez, who won a Best Play Tony for *The Inheritance*, and Amber Ruffin, the first Black woman to write for a late-night network talk show—*Late Night with Seth Meyers*.

The music is by Marc Shaiman, a five-time Oscar nominee and winner of a Tony

for *Hairspray*, while the lyrics are by Scott Wittman—who also won a Tony for *Hairspray*—in collaboration with Shaiman.

And the show's director and choreographer is Casey Nicholaw, who has been nominated for seven Tonys and won two: one for *The Book of Mormon* (Best Direction of a Musical) and one for *Some Like It Hot* (Best Choreography).

With that sort of team, it's not surprising that the show was nominated for a total of 13 Tonys in 2022—the most of any show that year—and garnered four wins: including gold statues for Nicholaw and J. Harrison Ghee (Jerry/Daphne) for Best Leading Actor in a Musical.

There are differences between the film and the musical that keep it fresh and make it relevant. For one, Jerry/Daphne is Black, as are Sweet Sue and lead singer Sugar Kane. The diversity of the band adds layers and depth to the characters and amplifies songs and situations that address issues of race in the '30s.

There'll be no spoilers here. Suffice it to say, instead of vying for the affections of a beautiful woman—as Lemmon and Curtis did over Monroe in 1959—these modern-day fugitives from mob justice discover the complexity of their feminine roles.

MAMMA MIA!

January 14–26, 2025

Mamma Mia!, in which the vaguely scandalous story is sweetened by the greatest hits of ABBA, returns to Orlando as part of its 25th-anniversary tour. The now-iconic show offers all the DNA-questioning hijinks audiences have come to expect and more chart busters than you'd hear at seven wedding receptions.

The score includes evergreens from the catalogue of one of the top-selling acts in popular music history. Among them: "Dancing Queen;" "Knowing Me, Knowing You;" "Lay All Your Love on Me;" "Money, Money, Money;" "Super Trouper;" "Take a Chance on Me;" "Voulez-Vous;" and, of course, the title song.

Mamma Mia! unfolds on a sunny Greek island, where American expatriate Donna Sheridan operates a small taverna while raising her daughter, Sophie, who's about to get married and wants her father to walk her down the aisle. There's one problem: From reading her mother's diary, Sophie discovers that her father could be any one of three men.

A sneaky sleuth, Sophie invites the trio of potential papas—Bill Austin, Harry Bright and Sam Carmichael—to the nuptials, writing in her mother's name and hoping to discover the truth. All show up, each unaware that the others will also be there.

Likewise in attendance are Rosie Mulligan and Tanya Chesham-Leigh, Donna's colorful gal pals from the days when they comprised the girl group "'Donna and the Dynamos."

The minefield of red herrings and misread intentions that follows played out night after night and matinee after matinee for a whopping 5,773 performances on Broadway and continues in London's West End, where it has played to packed houses since 1999. (The musical also spawned two hit movies starring Meryl Streep and Amanda Seyfried.)

If you're an ABBA fan (and who isn't?) then *Mamma Mia!*—written by Catherine Johnson and directed by Phyllida Lloyd—is the

reigning go-to for a hearty round of Swedish-made singalongs. There's no need to ask: "Does Your Mother Know?" about this one—she's probably already grabbing her coat.

A BEAUTIFUL NOISE

February 4–9, 2025

Neil Diamond retired from touring after a diagnosis of Parkinson's disease in 2018. But that didn't stop him from thrilling a packed house of theatergoers at the 2022 premier of *A Beautiful Noise*—the Broadway musical based on his life—with an impromptu performance of "Sweet Caroline" from his lounge seat.

Just as it always did when he performed it on the road, the first notes of this timeless radio classic—which was released in 1969—triggered a deliriously joyful singalong from every corner of the theater.

There's little chance that Diamond, 83, will show up for a surprise encore when *A Beautiful Noise* comes to Orlando. But there's every reason to believe that it will be an equally joyful occasion.

"Like 'Sweet Caroline,' the infectiousness of the overall experience will have audiences cheering 'so good, so good, so good!' by the show's end," writes *Entertainment Weekly* critic Dave Quinn.

Anybody who ever attended a Diamond concert—or, for that matter, a Boston Red Sox game, where the song is blasted over the Fenway Park loudspeakers before the bottom of the 8th inning—knows how true that is.

The show's book, by four-time Oscar nominee Andrew McCarten (*Bohemian Rhapsody*, *The Theory of Everything*, *The Two Popes*) is structured around a series of therapy sessions during which an aging Diamond reacts to his lyrics as they're read by his psychiatrist from a second-hand copy of *The Complete Lyrics of Neil Diamond*.

The poignance of hearing a vulnerable icon—here portrayed by Mark Jacoby (*Showboat*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Ragtime*)—ruminating on the agonies and ecstasies of superstardom cut short by illness is what sets *A Beautiful Noise* apart from standard jukebox musical fare.

But the jukebox is never far away, thanks to Nick Fradiani—a 2015 *American Idol* winner who portrays Diamond from his stint as a fledgling songwriter at the Brill Building through his ascendancy as a solo artist who



So good! So good! So good! In *A Beautiful Noise*, Nick Fradiani—a 2015 *American Idol* winner—portrays Neil Diamond from his stint as a fledgling songwriter at the Brill Building through his ascendancy as a solo artist who packed arenas and notched nearly 40 chart entries while selling 120 million albums and earning induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and the Songwriters Hall of Fame. Among Diamond's classics are: "Cherry, Cherry;" "Solitary Man;" "Song Sung Blue;" "Holly Holy" and more.

packed arenas and notched nearly 40 chart entries while selling 120 million albums and earning induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and the Songwriters Hall of Fame.

Fradiani delivers 29 songs from Diamond's immense catalogue, including such mega-hits as "Cherry, Cherry;" "Solitary Man;" "Song Sung Blue;" "Holly Holy" and more. "Beautiful Noise," which was the title song from a 1976 album, was (oddly for Diamond) never a chart single in the United States.

MJ THE MUSICAL

March 4-16, 2025

Has there ever been a tougher act to follow than Michael Jackson? Even 15 years after his death, the Gloved One seems to live on, a palpable presence occupying the stage in our imaginations. Who would dare follow in his magical moonwalking footsteps?

Roman Banks, for one. Seeming to channel Jackson, not merely impersonate him, Banks is

thrilling audiences in *MJ The Musical*. The touring production of the Broadway hit opened in Los Angeles in December to effusive reviews for the show and rhapsodic praise for the high-energy performance of Banks.

"Roman Banks is absolutely magnetic as the 'present day' MJ of 1992, constantly in motion with Jackson's magically fluid trademark dance moves," says Sam Hurwitt of the *Mercury News*. "Whenever this Michael is performing, he's always full on—and in a way he's always performing."

Banks, who was the first BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) actor to play Evan in *Dear Evan Hansen* on Broadway, later starred as Howie in the Disney+ series *High School Musical* and in TikTok's first live-stream musical, *For You, Paige*.

He wasn't, however, the first actor to step into Jackson's designer shoes in *MJ The Musical*. Myles Frost scored a Tony (Best Actor in a Musical) for playing Jackson in the Broadway production, which opened in 2021 and collected 10 nominations and four wins,



Roman Banks—who seems to channel Michael Jackson, not merely impersonate him—is thrilling audiences in *MJ The Musical*. The touring production of the Broadway hit opened to effusive reviews for the production and rhapsodic praise for the high-energy performance of Banks. A critic at the L.A. premiere wrote: “People were actually screaming ‘We love you, Michael!’ from the audience as if they were indeed at a [Michael Jackson] concert.”

three for lighting, sound and choreography.

Christopher Wheeldon, the director/choreographer, has mostly worked in ballet. His career began as a dancer and choreographer with the New York City Ballet in 1997. He retired as a dancer in 2000 to focus on his choreography and has created at least 23 major works for companies in Europe and the United States.

Pulitzer Prize-winner Lynn Nottage’s book is constructed around backstage interviews with Jackson during rehearsals for his 1992 *Dangerous World Tour*.

A fictional MTV personality prompts the King of Pop to revisit scenes of his often-difficult childhood—Joe Jackson, his abusive father, is a frequent presence—his early stardom with the Jackson 5 and his emergence as an international celebrity. Three different actors portray Jackson as he comes of age.

MJ stops short of 1993 and Jackson’s controversial final years. The show, then, is an unapologetic celebration of the most popular entertainer in the world, who remains

larger than life even in death. Packed with generation-spanning hits, it’s also a poignant portrait of an artist driven by demons that propelled him to superstardom at the expense of a relatively normal life.

A critic at the L.A. premiere wrote: “People were actually screaming ‘We love you, Michael!’ from the audience as if they were indeed at a [Michael Jackson] concert.”

MEAN GIRLS

March 28–30, 2025

SEASON OPTION

The 2004 movie *Mean Girls* was as trenchant a portrayal of the teenage psyche as *Rebel Without a Cause* or *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*. The difference? Nobody ever got a good musical out of *Rebel Without a Cause*.

The same can’t be said of *Mean Girls*, however, which writer Tina Fey adapted from her screenplay and brought to the stage in 2017 boasting music by Jeff Richmond (Fey’s



The appeal of *Mean Girls* is practically universal. If you remember being a teenager, then you can likely sympathize with home-schooled Cady Heron, who was raised in Africa by her research-scientist parents and must now navigate the wilds of a cliquish suburban high school in Illinois. No creature that she encountered on the savanna, it seems, is more cunning than Regina George, ruler of The Plastics, a cadre of popular girls that Cady infiltrates.

collaborator on the sitcom *The Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*) and lyrics by Nell Benjamin (*Legally Blonde*).

The show enjoyed a solid Broadway run, earning 12 Tony nominations and winning an Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding Book of a Musical. A big-screen version of the stage show was released in 2024 and had earned nearly \$100 million at the box office at this writing.

The appeal of the story is practically universal. If you remember being a teenager, then you can likely sympathize with home-schooled Cady Heron, who was raised in Africa by her research-scientist parents and must now navigate the wilds of a cliquish suburban high school in Illinois.

Where do her allegiances lie? After a disappointing first day, Cady befriends outsiders Janis Sarkisian and Damian Hubbard, who warn her about the danger of getting involved with The Plastics, the most popular clique in school, which is ruled by the sociopathic Regina George with the help of her

sidekicks, the dim-witted Karen Smith and the subservient Gretchen Wieners.

Cady soon finds herself at the center of a plot to dethrone Regina. However, when she successfully sabotages the teen tyrant and replaces her in the high-school hierarchy, she finds—ultimately to her dismay—that such power can be dangerously intoxicating.

When the first touring version of the musical played here in 2020, Matthew J. Palm of the *Orlando Sentinel* said it was “filled with energy, more than a few fun tunes, a couple of real surprises and gorgeous use of lighting and high-tech projections to bring the movie to the stage.”

This sophomore outing has an entirely different cast; in real life as in fiction, those Plastics grow up fast and there’s always a new bunch coming along. But the work of director Casey Hushion and choreographer John MacInnis will follow the winning blueprint laid down by Casey Nicholaw, who helmed the show on Broadway.



Welcome back, Simba! Every so often, Orlando has an audience with Disney's *The Lion King*. And when it happens, downtown becomes the Pride Lands for an entire month. The show is indeed an extravaganza from the first moments, when giraffes appear onstage. Then a cheetah and a herd of gazelles glide across the stage, while an elephant and a rhinoceros lumber along the theater aisles. Then it only gets more awe-inspiring from there.

DISNEY'S THE LION KING

April 23–May 18, 2025

SEASON OPTION

Every six or seven years, Orlando has an audience with *The Lion King*. And when it happens, downtown becomes the Pride Lands for an entire month.

Things are no different this time, with an extended run affording guests multiple chances to sample the eye-popping panoramas of costuming, puppetry and motion that have made Julie Taymor's visionary interpretation of the Disney classic the most successful Broadway musical of all time.

Even to the 20 million Americans who have caught the show on tour, there are always reasons to go again. *Orlando Weekly's* Seth Kubersky called the 2018 presentation here "a bounding gazelle of theatrical joy that elicits spontaneous ovations from the first giant elephant puppet to the final *ingonyama*." (Whew!)

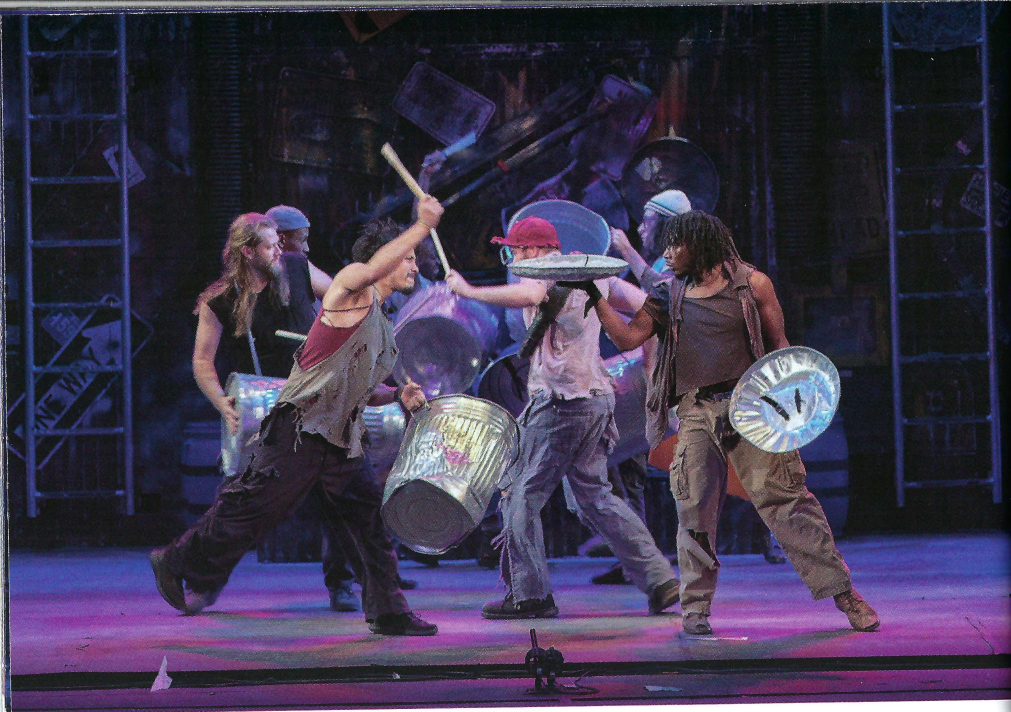
Disney's *The Lion King* is about a young

lion named Simba, who is the crown prince of an African savanna. When his father, Mufasa, dies in an accident staged by Scar, his uncle, Simba is made to feel responsible for his father's death and must overcome his fear of taking responsibility as the rightful heir to the throne.

It is indeed an extravaganza from the first moments. Using athletic performers and ingenious puppetry, giraffes appear. Then a cheetah slinks and a herd of gazelles glide across the stage, while an elephant and a rhinoceros lumber along the theater aisles. Birds soar over the heads of guests from long extended wires. Do they have our attention yet?

Thanks to Sir Elton John and Tim Rice, Disney's *The Lion King* includes some of Broadway's most recognizable (and most beloved) songs, including "Circle of Life," "I Just Can't Wait to Be King" and "Hakuna Matata."

Says Richard Zoglin of *Time* magazine: "Awe-inspiring! Broadway theater is alive again. [Julie] Taymor's imaginative ideas seem limitless. It's a gorgeous, gasp-inducing



What's the noise all about? Find out from *STOMP*, which debuted in 1991 with performers who use a variety of everyday objects such as brooms, hammers, hubcaps, lighters, plastic bags, shopping carts, trash cans, tea chests and vacuum cleaners as percussion instruments. The clamorous creation—which consists of a rotating eight-member troupe—has amazed audiences in more than 50 countries and was one of the longest running off-Broadway shows in history.

spectacle. Most important—against all odds—it has innocence. The show appeals to our primal, childlike excitement in the power of theater to make us see things afresh."

STOMP

June 6–7, 2025
SEASON OPTION

When you were a kid, did your mom ever admonish you to "stop all that banging around?" Maybe Luke Criswell and Steve McNicholas, the originators of *STOMP*—a unique combination of percussion, movement and visual comedy—were chastised as youngsters and decided to someday prove to their parental units that noise can be entertaining and exhilarating.

The Brighton, England-based duo—who had performed together doing street-comedy musicals—debuted *STOMP* in 1991 with performers who use a variety of everyday objects such as brooms, hammers, hubcaps, lighters, plastic bags, shopping carts, trash

cans, tea chests and vacuum cleaners as percussion instruments.

The rotating eight-member troupe bangs and, yes, stomps. But there's a method to the seeming madness, which has amazed audiences in more than 50 countries and was one of the longest running off-Broadway shows in history—notching an Obie and a Drama Desk award for Most Unique Theater Experience.

STOMP has toured the U.S. since 1995 and its performers have appeared on every major late-night talk show. They also performed an original piece on the 68th Annual Academy Awards telecast, recorded soundtracks for films and made their own IMAX movie.

There's not a word spoken in *STOMP*, yet the players are at times synced like a single clamorous organism and at other times they're engaged in displays of crowd-pleasing one-oneupmanship to see who can do the most with an unlikely piece of household detritus.

They also use their bodies as instruments—



Shucked, a “farm-to-fable” tale with echoes of *The Music Man*, is set in fictional Cob County, where all is well until one summer when the corn, source of all bliss, mysteriously dies in the field. Panicked villagers dispatch the aptly named Maizy to seek a cure for the crops, but she returns with a shuckster—we mean a shyster—from, of all places, Tampa. *Shucked* earned four Tony nominations during its run on Broadway.

hands slapping, fingers snapping and palms hitting open mouths for that goofy “oop” sound. There’s even spectacular fight choreography involving what appear to be pole-vault sticks.

“There’s a raw ‘hey kids, let’s put on a show’ aesthetic to *STOMP*,” writes the *Chicago Sun-Times*. “But instead of Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland singing in a barn, this show offers 21st-century rebel yellers whose chosen method of noise shows that anything can be a drum set—and even an old piece of plastic pipe can turn into something spectacular.”

SHUCKED

June 24–29, 2025

Shucked ran on Broadway for just nine months but the musical harvested nine Tony nominations (one win for Best Featured Actor in a Musical for Alex Newell). That’s a testament to the irresistible appeal of the show’s bumper crop of corny humor,

shameless puns and hot-buttered nostalgia.

If *Shucked* feels inspired by the classic TV variety show *Hee Haw*—well, shucks, that’s the truth of the matter.

The “cornpone delight” of the Broadway season delivered “non-stop yucks,” declared *Variety* after the show debuted in April 2023. “A throwback to the joys of lightweight musical comedy where fresh talent is discovered, songs are catchy, jokes are plentiful, and characters are appealing, fun and sweetly simple.”

The “farm-to-fable” tale with echoes of *The Music Man* is set in fictional Cob County, a timeless small-town Shangri-La until one summer when the corn, source of all bliss, mysteriously dies in the field.

Panicked villagers dispatch the aptly named Maizy—her wedding postponed by the cornemic—to seek a cure outside their little nirvana.

Maizy lands in Tampa, of all places, where she mistakenly consults Gordy, a “corn doctor” who turns out to be a podiatrist.

and (s)huckster. Charmed, she returns in triumph to Cob County with Gordy, triggering a cornucopia of sham dealings and romantic betrayals leading to a happy—if unabashedly corny—ending.

What an admiring critic called the “smart-dumb book” by Robert Horn—whose work on *Tootsie* earned him a Tony for Best Book of a Musical—is cannily staged by director Jack O’Brien, who snared one Tony for Best Direction of a Musical (*Hairspray*) and two

more for Best Direction of a Play (*Henry IV* and *The Coast of Utopia*).

The score by veteran Nashville hitmakers Brandy Clark and Shane McAnally—who have three Grammys and 27 Grammy nominations between them—offers ear-worm melodies that have audiences humming long after they’ve left theaters.

Mandalay Pictures has announced plans to adapt *Shucked* for the big screen—sure to be a boon to cineplex popcorn sales. ■

SUBSCRIPTION AND TICKET INFORMATION



EVENT: AdventHealth Broadway in Orlando 24/25 season

SHOWS/DATES: *Girl from the North Country*, September 24–29, 2024; *The Book of Mormon* (season option), October 22–27, 2024; *The Cher Show*, November 12–17, 2024; *Some Like It Hot*, December 17–22, 2024; *Mamma Mia!* January 14–26, 2025; *Mean Girls* (season option), March 28–30, 2025; *MJ The Musical*, March 4–16, 2025; *Disney’s The Lion King* (season option), April 23–May 18, 2025; *Shucked*, June 24–29, 2025; *STOMP* (season option), June 6–7, 2025

TICKETS: Season subscription renewals go on sale first, followed by new subscriptions. If no new subscriptions are available, then you may add your name to the waitlist at broadwayinorlando.com/subscriptions and be notified if there are any openings. Once subscriptions are sold out, tickets for each show will go on sale about two months in advance, and may be purchased at drphillipscenter.org or by calling the box office at 407.358.6603. For the most up-to-date information, sign up for the arts center’s newsletter at drphillipscenter.org, or follow its social media updates on Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter) and YouTube. You may also visit the box office at 445 South Magnolia Avenue, Orlando, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekdays, or from noon to 4 p.m. on Saturdays. For groups of 10 or more, email groups@drphillipscenter.org or call 407.455.5550 (online and group ticket purchases are subject to handling fees.)





FANTASTIC FOURSOME

EVERYTHING FROM A FAUX NANNY TO A
RAUCOUS REVOLUTION ARE STILL TO COME.

BY RANDY NOLES AND CATHERINE HINMAN

Even with the upcoming 23/24 season of AdventHealth Broadway in Orlando announced, you may still find single-show tickets—if they're available—for an astonishing slate of blockbusters. To learn more about how to secure a seat, see the instructions at the end of this story. We hope to see you as the magic unfolds—as it always does during Broadway in Orlando—at Walt Disney Theater.

MRS. DOUBTFIRE

April 23–28

During its Broadway run, *Mrs. Doubtfire*—the comedic musical about everybody's favorite faux Scottish nanny—earned a Tony nomination for Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role in a Musical (Rob McClure in the title role). Now this feel-good, family-friendly production is on tour and winning hearts across the country.

Mrs. Doubtfire is based on the 1993 film of the same name—which starred Robin Williams—with music and lyrics by Karey and Wayne Kirkpatrick (*Something Rotten*) and book by Karey Kirkpatrick and John O'Farrell, a bestselling British author as well as a columnist, a podcaster and a playwright.

Directed by four-time Tony-winner Jerry Zaks (*The House of Blue Leaves*, *Lend Me a Tenor*, *Six Degrees of Separation*, *Guys and Dolls*), *Mrs. Doubtfire* tells the story of an out-of-work actor, Daniel Hillard, who loses custody of his kids during a messy divorce.

So, the down-on-his-luck dad concocts a kindly alter ego, Euphegenia Doubtfire, who manages to become a nanny to his own children in a desperate bid to remain in their lives—even if it's in disguise.

However, as “Mrs. Doubtfire” gradually assumes a life of her own, the fictional character whom Daniel created teaches him more than he bargained for about how to be a good father.

For the tour, McClure is excited about reprising his Tony-winning role. “People who see tours are enthusiastic,” says McClure. “There’s a

sense that touring audiences say, ‘Oh, we’ve been waiting for you.’ So I’m just as excited to bring the show to them as they are to see it.” McClure’s real-life wife, Maggie Lakis, co-stars as Daniel’s onstage wife, Miranda.

“This production is reminiscent of the old time Broadway musical comedies, full of big laughs and big numbers,” writes the *Maryland Theater Guide*. “But it also has a message about the power of love, forgiveness, and inclusion—and that family comes in all shapes and sizes.”

PETER PAN

May 14–19

“Second star to the right, and straight on ‘til morning” are the directions to Neverland. Thankfully, though, you only have to go as far as downtown Orlando to see a new version of *Peter Pan*, starring the high-flying (and mischievous) James M. Barrie character who has delighted children and adults alike since 1902.

This soaring fantasy has been brought back to life in a production by Emmy-winning director Lonny Price (*Sunset Boulevard*, *Lady Day at Emerson’s Bar and Grill*) with additional book by Larissa FastHorse.

In 2018, FastHorse became the first Native American playwright to have a show produced on Broadway with *The Thanksgiving Play*, which was critically acclaimed and is slated to return to Broadway this spring.

Peter Pan’s unforgettable music—by Morris “Moose” Charlap and Jule Styne with lyrics by Carolyn Leigh, Betty Comden and Adolph

Green—is from the 1954 Broadway production that starred Mary Martin as the boy who never grows up. Remember when a telecast of that version aired every few years on NBC?

If so, then you can probably still sing “I’m Flying,” “I’ve Gotta Crow,” “I Won’t Grow Up” and “Neverland.” Wouldn’t it be great to hear them again live? Better yet, you can introduce your own youngsters to this timeless tale about the power of positive thinking and finding the magic already around you.

Everybody has their favorite version, of course. You may be more partial to the 1953 Disney animated feature. Or to *Hook*, the 1991 live-action feature directed by Steven Spielberg and starring Robin Williams. The show was revived on Broadway in 1979 with Sandy Duncan as Peter, and again in 1990 and 1991 with Cathy Rigby in the title role.

In any case, the adventure begins when Peter and Tinker Bell, his mischievous fairy sidekick, visit the nursery of the Darling children late one night.

With a sprinkle of pixie dust and some happy thoughts, the children are taken on a magical journey where they visit Neverland, meet the Lost Boys and battle swashbuckling pirates—including Peter’s arch-nemesis, Captain Hook, and his bumbling boatswain Mr. Smee.

“*Peter Pan* is one of the great treasures of the American musical theater,” says Price, the director. “The show nurtures and inspires the imagination of its audience and reminds us to keep alive the child within us all.”

CLUE: A NEW COMEDY

June 4–9

Murder and blackmail are on the menu when six mysterious guests assemble at Boddy Manor for a night they’ll never forget. Who killed Mr. Boddy? Was it Mrs. Peacock in the study with the knife? Or was it Colonel Mustard in the library with the wrench?

If these questions ring a bell, then you’ve probably played “Clue,” the classic Hasbro board game. Or perhaps you’ve seen the 1985 Paramount black comedy of the same name, which starred Eileen Brennan, Tim Curry, Madeline Kahn, Christopher Lloyd, Michael McKean, Martin Mull, Lesley Ann Warren and Colleen Camp.

That flick—on which *Clue: A New Comedy* is based—was adapted for the stage by Sandy Rustin from Jonathan Lynn’s screen-

play, with additional material by Hunter Foster and Eric Price.

Set in 1954, at the height of the Red Scare, the play begins as the eager-to-please butler, Wadsworth, prepares for the arrival of Mr. Boddy’s six guests—invited to creepy Boddy Manor under dubious circumstances and assigned aliases for the night.

The motley characters—each mired in political corruption of one kind or another—are likewise all being extorted by Mr. Boddy. If they want to keep their secrets safe, they’ll have to kill Wadsworth with one of the weapons provided to them—specifically a candlestick, a wrench, a lead pipe, a revolver, a rope and a dagger.

But when the lights go out, it’s Mr. Boddy who winds up dead. And so begins a slapstick search for the killer among them through the multiroomed mansion, with its hidden passages and fallen chandeliers, where the absurdity rises along with the body count.

The *New York Times* calls *Clue: A New Comedy* “a welcome throwback to an era of physical comedy that’s been mostly usurped by sarcasm...the show is a very fun, very silly 1950s-set whodunit that strikes some contemporary parallels on the way to its grand reveal.”

LES MISÉRABLES

June 25–30

Get ready to go back to the barricades and hear the people sing. *Les Misérables*—one of the most popular and influential musicals of all time, which was here in 2012 and 2019—will return to uplift and entertain audiences with its powerful tale of freedom, love and redemption.

“The phenomenon of *Les Misérables* never fails to astound me,” says Producer Cameron Mackintosh. “No show in history has been able to continually reinvent itself and remain a contemporary musical attracting new generations of brilliant new talent—many of whom go on to international stardom.”

Les Misérables is based on Victor Hugo’s epic 1862 novel and set in early 19th-century France. Mackintosh debuted the musical in London in 1985 and brought it to Broadway in 1987—where it won eight Tonys, including Best Musical—and ran for 6,680 shows spanning 16 years.

This over-the-top extravaganza—informally



Mrs. Doubtfire (above) is the story of Daniel Hilliard, an out-of-work actor who, following a nasty divorce, creates a kindly alter-ego, Euphegenia Doubtfire, to remain near his children. *Peter Pan* (below) is a new adaptation of the classic J.M. Barrie children's fantasy that features songs from the fondly remembered 1954 Broadway production.





Clue: A New Comedy (above), based on the Hasbro board game, certainly offers a motley roster of suspects. *The New York Times* calls the show "a welcome throwback to an era of physical comedy that's been mostly usurped by sarcasm." *Les Misérables* (below), based on Victor Hugo's epic 1862 novel and set in early 19th-century France, has now been seen by 130 million people in 53 countries.



dubbed *Les Mis*—has now been seen by 130 million people in 53 countries and presented in 22 languages. Audiences are awed by the jaw-dropping technology, stirred by the memorable music and inspired by the universal themes of love, courage and hope.

The first Broadway revival was in 2006 and the second in 2014, following the Oscar-nominated film adaptation that starred Hugh Jackman and Anne Hathaway. In 2009 the show set out on an acclaimed 25th-anniversary tour that eliminated the revolving stage and used projections for scene changes.

Written by Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schönberg, the sung-through musical follows the story of Jean Valjean, a French peasant, and his search for redemption after being imprisoned for stealing a loaf of bread to feed his sister's starving child.

Valjean, released on parole after 19 years and inspired by a priest's extraordinary act of mercy, begins his life anew after destroying his yellow "ticket of leave" card that stigmatizes him as an ex-convict.

Later a successful politician and industrialist, Valjean—now known as Monsieur Madeleine—adopts an orphaned girl, Cosette. But

he is eventually recognized and relentlessly pursued by the dogged Javert, a by-the-book police inspector. Valjean and Cosette flee to Paris, which is engulfed by revolution.

Boublil and Schönberg's score, with lyrics by Herbert Kretzmer, includes now-classic songs such as "I Dreamed a Dream," "On My Own," "Bring Him Home," "One Day More," "Master of the House" and "Do You Hear the People Sing?" ■

IF YOU GO

Tickets may be purchased at drphillipscenter.org or by calling the box office at 407.358.6603. You may also visit the box office at 445 South Magnolia Avenue, Orlando, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekdays, or from noon to 4 p.m. on Saturdays. For groups of 10 or more, email groups@drphillipscenter.org or call 407.455.5550 (online and group ticket purchases are subject to handling fees.)

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In a tradition dating back to 2017, the arts center has continued its Broadway Community Giveback Initiative during the 24/25 AdventHealth Broadway in Orlando season. Through the program, the arts center—along with its public and private partners—provides tickets and pre-show experiences for 20 beneficiary organizations, including schools, after-school programs and nonprofit groups. So far this year more than 800 guests, mostly kids, attended pre-show brunches and performances of *Aladdin* and *Peter Pan*. For adult-oriented *Moulin Rouge*, more than 300 teachers, veterans and first responders from Orange County and the City of Orlando enjoyed food and drinks at a reception on the arts center's Kessler Tier before seeing the show. "Continuing to make the arts accessible for everyone is engrained in who we are," says Kathy Ramsberger, president and CEO. "We're proud that our Broadway Community Giveback Initiative has provided over 4,000 experiences for our residents."

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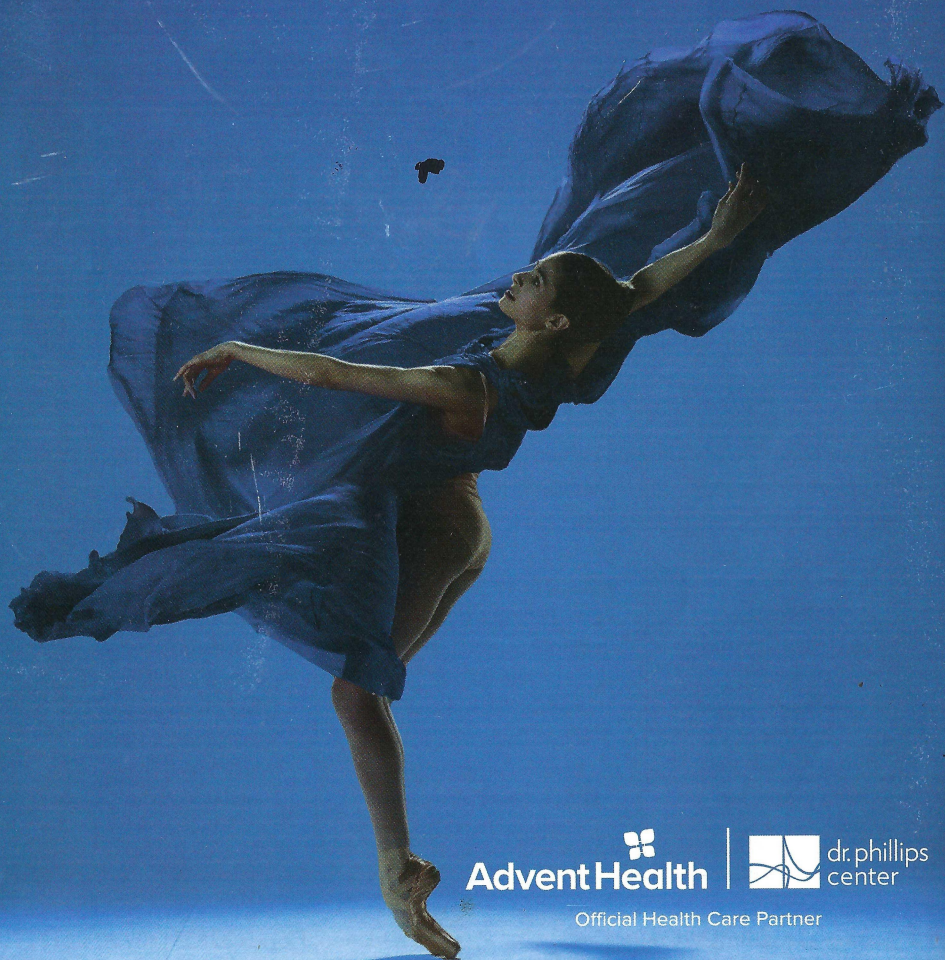
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